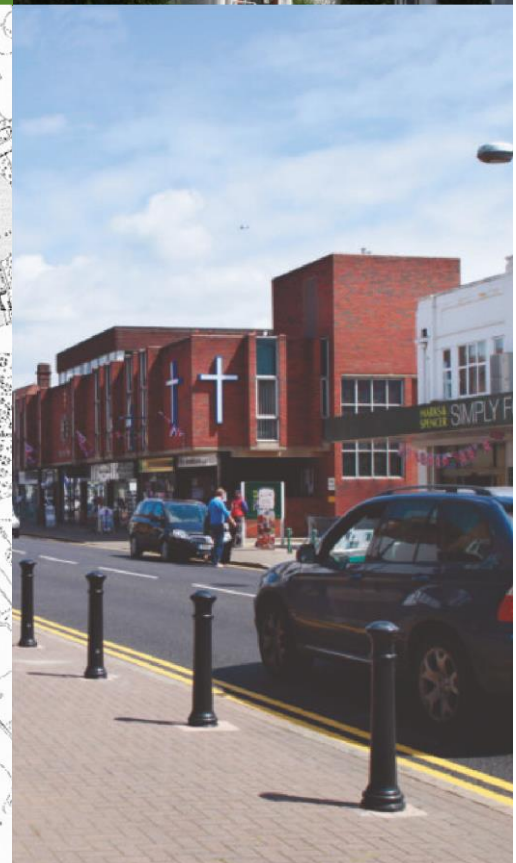
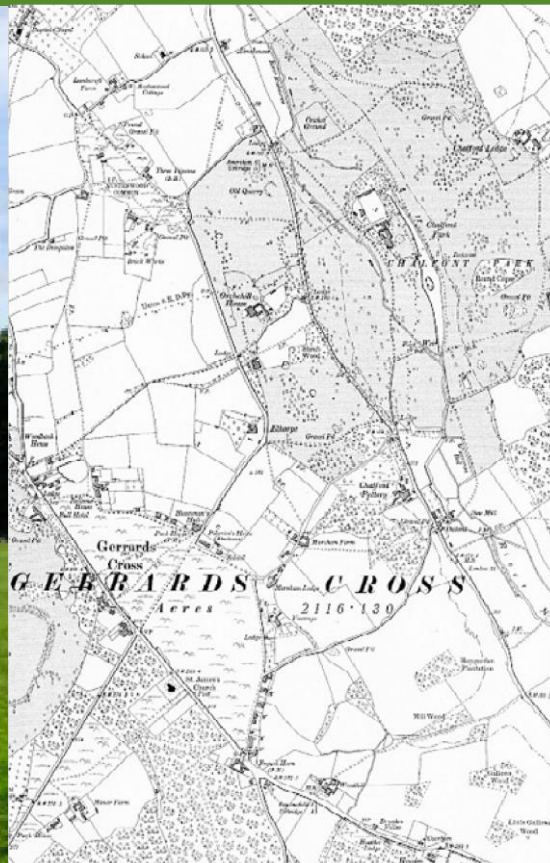


Gerrards Cross Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2017 - 2040

Basic Conditions Statement

Dec 2023



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1. Introduction

This Basic Conditions Statement has been produced to accompany the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan (referred to as 'the Plan') to its submission to the local planning authority, Buckinghamshire Council, under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ('the Regulations').

Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act requires that a Neighbourhood Plan (or order) will be considered to have met the seven basic conditions if:

- a) having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the order,
- b) having special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, it is appropriate to make the order,
- c) having special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area, it is appropriate to make the order,
- d) the making of the order contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,
- e) the making of the order is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area),
- f) the making of the order does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations, and
- g) prescribed conditions are met in relation to the order and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order.

Basic Conditions (b) and (c) relate to neighbourhood development orders therefore are not relevant to the consideration of whether the GERRARDS CROSS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN meets the basic conditions.

1. Supporting documents and evidence

The Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan is supported by a Consultation Statement and this Basic Conditions Statement.

2. Key statements

Gerrards Cross Town Council is a qualifying body and entitled to submit a Neighbourhood Plan for its own parish. The Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan expresses policies that relate to the development and use of land only within the neighbourhood area.

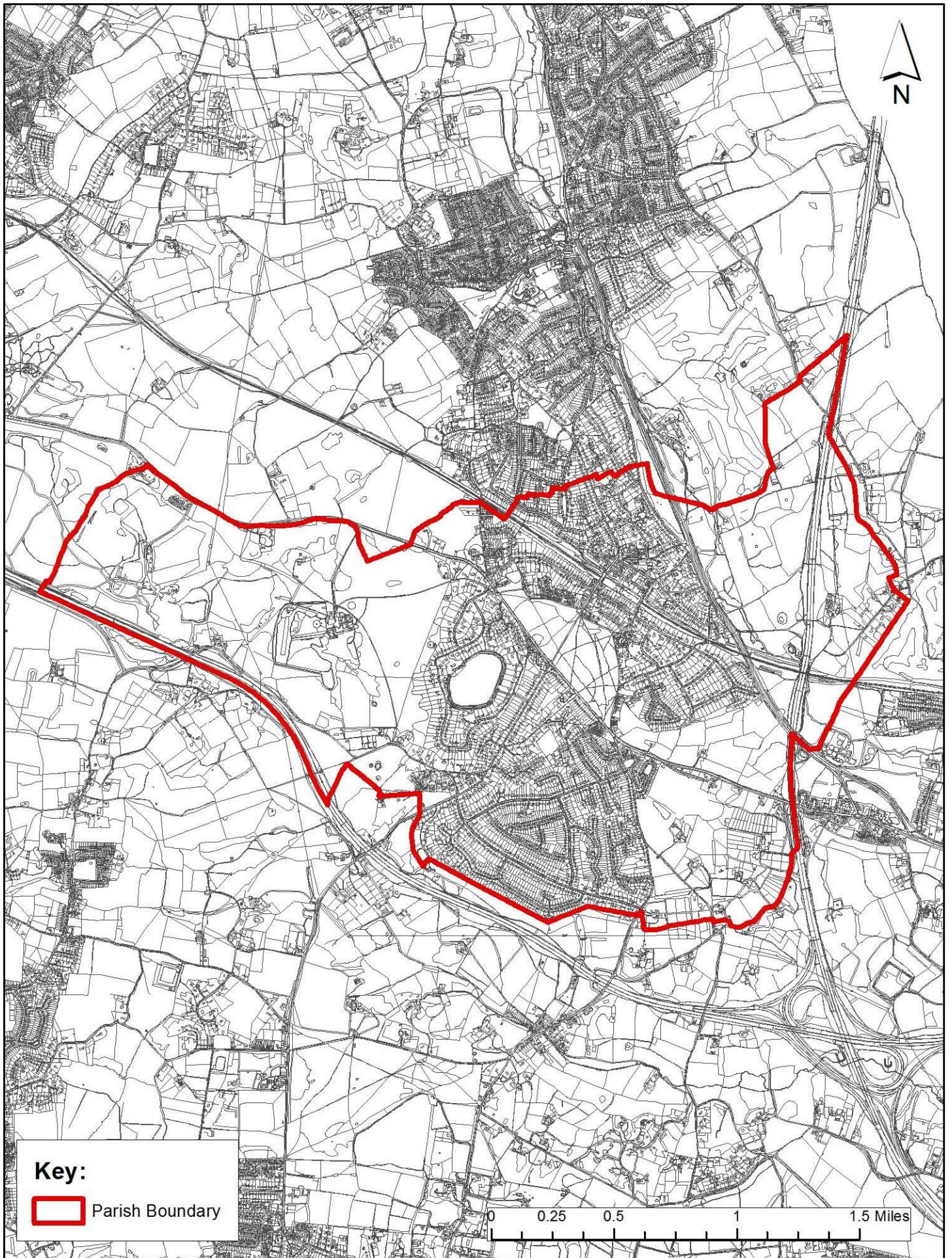
The neighbourhood area is contiguous with the parish boundary, as shown in the map on the following page.

The Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan covers the period from 2017 to 2040.

No provision for excluded development such as national infrastructure is contained within the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area. It is solely related to the area of Gerrards Cross as designated by South Bucks District Council (now Buckinghamshire Council) on 22nd September 2016.

There are no other Neighbourhood Development Plans in place for the Gerrards Cross neighbourhood area.



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2. Conformity with national planning policy

1. *Introduction*

It is required that the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan has appropriate regard to national planning policy and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. National policy and guidance is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

2. *National Planning Policy Framework*

The NPPF in sections 29-30 and 37 refers to Neighbourhood Development Plans and seeks that those plans have regard to the policies in the NPPF and to be in 'general conformity' with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. This phrasing is explained more clearly by the Localism Act which refers to the 'adopted Development Plan'.

This section demonstrates that, of the 13 key objectives within the NPPF, the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan has policies that meet 11 of these, specifically in relation to:

- Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Building a strong, competitive economy
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Promoting sustainable transport
- Making effective use of land
- Achieving well-designed places
- Protecting Green Belt land
- Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan has 17 principal objectives. We list them in table 2.1 below and which NPPF goals each objective seeks to address.

Table 2.2 then provides a summary of how each policy in the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan conforms specifically to the NPPF.

Ref	Objective	NPPF Goal
1	Resist the re-use of retail premises for residential development where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Building a strong, competitive economy ➤ Ensuring the vitality of town centres
2	Reuse or redevelop empty premises where possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Building a strong, competitive economy ➤ Ensuring the vitality of town centres
3	Encourage and support new businesses and retail opportunities in order to maintain the vibrant feel of a thriving town centre that is the hub of the local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Building a strong, competitive economy ➤ Ensuring the vitality of town centres ➤ Achieving well-designed places
4	To allocate a site for future development in Gerrards Cross to meet the identified needs of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Delivering a sufficient supply of homes ➤ Achieving well-designed places
5	Ensure future housing is designed and developed sympathetically and in character with the existing built environment of Gerrards Cross.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Delivering a sufficient supply of homes ➤ Achieving well-designed places
6	Provide a housing mix that meets the needs of the community including the provision of two and three bed properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Delivering a sufficient supply of homes ➤ Achieving well-designed places
7	Where appropriate and possible, retain and redevelop existing buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conserving and enhancing the historic environment ➤ Achieving well-designed places ➤ Making effective use of land
8	Ensure that previously developed land, particularly where vacant, derelict, or underused, is prioritised for development over greenfield sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Delivering a sufficient supply of homes ➤ Achieving well-designed places
9	Encourage greater local participation in community initiatives by discouraging gated developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Achieving well-designed places ➤ Promoting healthy and safe communities
10	Manage the growing volume of traffic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensuring the vitality of town centres ➤ Promoting healthy and safe communities ➤ Promoting sustainable transport
11	Provide parking for visitors, shoppers and residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensuring the vitality of town centres ➤ Promoting healthy and safe communities ➤ Promoting sustainable transport
12	Provide more cycle routes and footpaths in order to cut the volume of traffic and promote a healthy lifestyle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensuring the vitality of town centres ➤ Promoting healthy and safe communities

		➤ Promoting sustainable transport
13	Where not deemed suitable for release to development, to preserve the existing Green Belt around the town	➤ Protecting Green Belt land
14	Preserve and protect woodlands, commons and green open spaces that are important to the community of Gerrards Cross.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conserving and enhancing the natural environment ➤ Promoting healthy and safe communities
15	Ensure landscaping and planting schemes where possible are proposed and implemented within all new developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conserving and enhancing the natural environment ➤ Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change ➤ Promoting healthy and safe communities
16	Preserve the heritage and historic character of Gerrards Cross	➤ Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
17	To maintain a strategic gap between Gerrards Cross and surrounding areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conserving and enhancing the natural environment ➤ Promoting healthy and safe communities

Table 2.2: Assessment of how each policy in the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan conforms to the NPPF

No.	Policy title and reference	NPPF ref. (para.)	Commentary
1	Re-use of retail premises	81, 84, 86	The policy contributes to the NPPF objectives of building a strong, competitive economy and securing the vitality of town centres by seeking to protect existing retail units from being lost to alternative uses.
2/3	Maintaining a vibrant town centre	81, 84, 86	The policy contributes to the NPPF objectives of building a strong, competitive economy and securing the vitality of town centres by encouraging new employment uses, including for start-up businesses, within the town centre.
3	Protection of European sites	174, 175, 179, 181, 182	The policy contributes to the NPPF objective of conserving and enhancing the natural environment by requiring development within the exclusion zone of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) to make financial contributions towards schemes that minimise recreational pressure on the SAC.
4	Orchehill Rise car park	28, 69, 70	The policy contributes to the NPPF objective of delivering a sufficient supply of homes by allocating a site for residential use. It also contributes to the NPPF objective of achieving well designed places by ensuring that design is of the highest standard and protect its surrounding environment.
5	General design of residential development	28, 106, 129, 154	The policy contributes to the NPPF objectives of achieving well designed places, promoting sustainable transport and meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change. It does this by requiring development to reflect townscape character, provide good walking and cycling connections and cycle storage and be water efficient and meet the highest possible standards of construction.
6	Housing mix	28, 29, 62, 63	The policy contributes to the NPPF objective of delivering a sufficient supply of homes by requiring the mix of housing development to reflect local need.
7	Existing Buildings	126, 127	The policy contributes to the NPPF objective of achieving well designed places by ensure that design amendments when buildings are re-used retain the character of Gerrards Cross.

No.	Policy title and reference	NPPF ref. (para.)	Commentary
8	Brownfield Land	119, 120	This policy contributes to the NPPF objective of making effective use of land by directing development towards the built-up area of Gerrards Cross. This allows for further growth in the town on infill or brownfield sites.
9	Lifetime neighbourhoods and security	92, 130	This policy contributes to the NPPF objective of promoting healthy and safe communities by encouraging development to contribute to the concept of 'lifetime neighbourhoods' and to ensure that it is informed by principles that make for safe neighbourhoods.
10	Highway Improvements	110, 111	This policy contributes to the NPPF objective of promoting sustainable transport by ensuring that the need for highways improvements adequately consider the needs of cyclists and pedestrians.
11	Residential off-street parking	104, 107, 108	This policy contributes to the NPPF objective of promoting sustainable transport by seeking to ensure new residential developments provide appropriate levels of parking facilities.
12	Retention of public car parking	88, 104, 106	This policy contributes to the NPPF objective of securing the vitality of town centres by preserving adequate parking facilities that provide safe access to the retail area of the town.
13	Pedestrian access and walkway routes	104, 105, 106	This policy contributes to the NPPF objective of promoting sustainable transport by seeking to retain and improve access to key facilities within Gerrards Cross by pedestrians.
14	Gerrards Cross Settlement Boundary	80, 174	This policy contributes to multiple NPPF objectives by establishing the spatial strategy for the Neighbourhood Area. This includes defining the built-up area boundary and appropriate uses beyond the urban edge.
15	Protection and enhancement of Local Green Space	101, 102	This policy contributes to the NPPF objectives of promoting healthy and safe communities and conserving and enhancing the natural environment by designating a series of spaces that are special to the community and fulfil the NPPF criteria.
16	Trees and Landscape	131, 174	This policy contributes to the NPPF objective of conserving and enhancing the natural environment by seeking to preserve the natural features of Gerrards Cross.

No.	Policy title and reference	NPPF ref. (para.)	Commentary
17	Protection of Historic Environment	28, 190,	This policy contributes to the NPPF objective of conserving and enhancing the historic environment by identifying and seeking to protect treasured historic assets within Gerrards Cross.
18	Settlement Gaps	127, 130	This policy contributes to the NPPF objective of conserving and enhancing the natural environment by seeking to prevent coalescence and maintain the identity of Gerrards Cross.

3. Contribution towards sustainable development

The NPPF states in paragraph 10 that 'at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

Table 3.1 below summarises how the objectives and policies in the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan contribute towards sustainable development, as defined in the NPPF.

Table 3.1: Assessment of Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan objectives and policies against sustainable development

Deliver Economic Sustainability	
<i>NPPF Definition – "to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy"</i>	
Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resist the re-use of retail premises for residential development where appropriate. ○ Reuse or redevelop empty premises where possible. ○ Encourage and support new businesses and retail opportunities in order to maintain the vibrant feel of a thriving town centre that is the hub of the local community. Provide parking for visitors, shoppers and residents. ○ Where appropriate and possible, retain and redevelop existing buildings. ○ Ensure that previously developed land, particularly where vacant, derelict, or underused, is prioritised for development over greenfield sites. ○ Provide parking for visitors, shoppers and residents. ○ Provide more cycle routes and footpaths in order to cut the volume of traffic and promote a healthy lifestyle
Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan Policies	<p>Policy 1: Re-use of retail premises</p> <p>Policy 2/3: Maintain a vibrant town centre</p> <p>Policy 7: Existing buildings</p> <p>Policy 8: Brownfield land</p> <p>Policy 12: Retention of public car parking</p> <p>Policy 13: Pedestrian access and walkway routes</p>
Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan Comments	<p>The Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan seeks to preserve the retail base of the area (Policy 1). It also places emphasis on the enabling new businesses to have opportunity to succeed (Policy 2/3). Policies 7 and 8 provide positive policy support for the redevelopment of existing buildings that could be put to more active uses (Policy 7) and generally for use of brownfield land within the settlement boundary (Policy 8). Policy 12 protects parking that serves the town centre and Policy 13 seeks to deliver improved pedestrian access to the retail centre and key services.</p>

Deliver Social Sustainability	
<i>NPPF Definition – "to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities"</i>	
Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage and support new businesses and retail opportunities in order to maintain the vibrant feel of a thriving town centre that is the hub of the local community. ○ To allocate a site for future development in Gerrards Cross to meet the identified needs of the community. ○ Ensure future housing is designed and developed sympathetically and in character with the existing built environment of Gerrards Cross.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide a housing mix that meets the needs of the community including the provision of two and three bed properties. ○ Encourage greater local participation in community initiatives by discouraging gated developments. ○ Manage the growing volume of traffic. ○ Provide parking for visitors, shoppers and residents. ○ Provide more cycle routes and footpaths in order to cut the volume of traffic and promote a healthy lifestyle. ○ Preserve and protect woodlands, commons and green open spaces that are important to the community of Gerrards Cross.
Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan Policies	<p>Policy 2/3: Maintain a vibrant town centre</p> <p>Policy 4: Orchehill Rise car park</p> <p>Policy 5: General design of residential development</p> <p>Policy 6: Housing mix</p> <p>Policy 9: Lifetime neighbourhoods and security</p> <p>Policy 10: Highway Improvements</p> <p>Policy 11: Residential off-street parking</p> <p>Policy 12: Retention of public car parking</p> <p>Policy 13: Pedestrian access and walkway routes</p> <p>Policy 15: Protection and enhancement of Local Green Space</p>
Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan Comments	<p>The Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan seeks to maintain a thriving community for all ages within Gerrards Cross. It identifies specific infrastructure requirements (Policy 10 – highway improvements, Policy 11 – provision of residential parking, Policy 12 – retention of public car parking and Policy 13 – improved pedestrian routes) that will enable Gerrards Cross to better support the needs of its community. It seeks to protect existing local green spaces that are special to the community and allows people to engage in informal recreation (Policy 15). The decrease in car movements and associated congestion will decrease air pollution and its effects on human health whilst the intention to keep the retail centre of Gerrards Cross thriving will provide social opportunities and maintain the vibrancy of the community. The delivery of a range of house sizes (Policy 6) on new site allocations (Policy 4) will ensure that the housing needs of a wider range of the existing community can be met. More widely, the importance of good design is required to underpin all new development (Policy 5).</p>

Deliver Environmental Sustainability

NPPF Definition – “to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; and adapting to climate change”

Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure future housing is designed and developed sympathetically and in character with the existing built environment of Gerrards Cross. ○ Where not deemed suitable for release to development, to preserve the existing Green Belt around the town. ○ Preserve and protect woodlands, commons and green open spaces that are important to the community of Gerrards Cross. ○ Ensure landscaping and planting schemes where possible are proposed and implemented within all new developments. ○ Preserve the heritage and historic character of Gerrards Cross. ○ To maintain a strategic gap between Gerrards Cross and surrounding areas.
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<p>Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan Policies</p>	<p>Policy 4: Orchehill Rise car park</p> <p>Policy 5: General design of residential development</p> <p>Policy 7: Existing Buildings</p> <p>Policy 8: Brownfield Land</p> <p>Policy 14: Gerrards Cross Settlement Boundary</p> <p>Policy 15: Protection and enhancement of Local Green Space</p> <p>Policy 16: Trees and Landscape</p> <p>Policy 17: Protection of Historic Environment</p> <p>Policy 18: Settlement Gaps</p>
<p>Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan Comments</p>	<p>The Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect the character of the parish by focusing development within the existing built-up area (Policy 14) and avoiding coalescence with neighbouring settlements (Policy 18). It also protects the rural character of the surrounding area by focusing development on a specific allocated site (Policy 4) and places a focus on protecting the high quality landscape (Policy 16). Further protection of the character of Gerrards Cross is secured through the requirement for good design by new development (Policy 5) and by designating certain spaces as local green spaces of importance to the local community (Policy 15). The historic environment of Gerrards Cross is recognised, with specific heritage features of value to the community identified for conservation and enhancement (Policy 17). Policy 5 also seeks to ensure that new development is designed to be water efficient.</p>

As demonstrated in Table 3.1, the strategic objectives of the Neighbourhood Development Plan are considered to comprise a balance of economic, social and environmental goals.

4. General conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan

The development plan covering the Neighbourhood Plan Area currently consists of the following:

- South Bucks Local Plan March 1999, saved policies
- South Bucks Core Strategy February 2011
- Buckinghamshire Mineral and Waste Plan 2016-2036

The policies of relevance are shown in Table 4.1 below, along with a consideration of whether they represent the strategic policies of the development plan. Where they do, consideration is made of whether the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with them.

Any policy that is not identified in Table 4.1 is not considered to be relevant to the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan because the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan does not have any policies that directly relate to it.

Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Development Plan Policy	Commentary
Policy 1: Re-use of retail premises	Policy TC1 - Development in Beaconsfield (New Town), Burnham and Gerrards Cross Policy S1 - District Shopping Centres (Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross) Core Policy 11: Healthy and Viable Town and Village Centres	Policy TC1 seeks to retain key uses in the town centre, with the focusing being on retail uses. Policy S1 specifically seeking to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of Gerrards Cross District Shopping Centre. Core Policy 11 seeks further growth of retail provision in Gerrards Cross. GCNP Policy 1 supports these policies with a specific requirement to demonstrate no demand for an existing retail premises if it is to be used for non-retail purposes.
Policy 2/3: Maintaining a vibrant town centre	Policy TC1 - Development in Beaconsfield (New Town), Burnham and Gerrards Cross Core Policy 11: Healthy and Viable Town and Village Centres	Policy TC1 encourages a mix of uses that encourage vitality in the town centre. Within the context of the NPPF definition of 'main town centre uses', this could include employment-generating use. Core Policy 11 is similarly supportive of main town centre uses, including office and retail, which generate employment. GCNP Policy 2 encourages uses in the town which create employment and can mitigate possible detrimental effects.
Policy 3: Protection of European sites	Core Policy 9: Natural Environment	Core Policy 9 seeks to conserve and enhance the Burnham Beeches SAC. GCNP Policy 2/3 requires specific contributions towards its conservation within the SAMM mitigation zone.
Policy 4: Orchehill Rise car park	Core Policy 1: Housing Provision and Delivery	Core Policy 1 requires addition housing provision in South Bucks to be focused in settlements including Gerrards Cross. GCNP Policy 4 allocates a site for housing.
Policy 5: General design of residential development	Policy EP3 - The Use, Design and Layout of Development	Policy EP3 requires the design of development to respect and harmonise with surrounding properties. GCNP Policy 5 provides more detail about the matters relating to townscape character which are of relevance.
Policy 6: Housing mix	Core Policy 2: Housing Type and Size	Core Policy 2 requires development to provide for a suitable mix of dwelling types and sizes. GCNP Policy 6 specifically requires development to demonstrate how it can increase the proportion of modest family homes, this being a type of housing in need in the area.
Policy 7: Existing Buildings	Policy EP3 - The Use, Design and Layout of Development	Policy EP3 requires the design of development to respect and harmonise with surrounding properties. GCNP Policy 7 addresses this in respect of it a building's character and features.
Policy 8: Brownfield Land	Core Policy 1: Housing Provision and Delivery	Core Policy 1 requires at least 80% of the development in the district over the plan period to be on brownfield land. GCNP Policy 8 gives active support to this and requires it to be prioritised over greenfield sites.
Policy 9: Lifetime neighbourhoods and security	Core Policy 2: Housing Type and Size	Core Policy 2 requires development to provide for a suitable mix of dwelling types and sizes and to make sure it meets the needs of all sections of the

Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Development Plan Policy	Commentary
		community. GCNP Policy 9 requires development to contribute towards the creation of 'lifetime neighbourhoods', by showing that design is inclusive.
Policy 10: Highway Improvements	Core Policy 7: Accessibility and Transport	Core Policy 7 requires the impact of development on the road network to be minimised and mitigated through mobility management. GCNP Policy 10 requires improvements to be made that specifically address the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.
Policy 11: Residential off-street parking	Core Policy 7: Accessibility and Transport	Core Policy 7 seeks to ensure that car parking levels help to minimise the impact of vehicle travel on the roads. GCNP Policy 11 establishes parking standards and seeks to ensure that this should be provided, where possible, within the curtilage of the house rather than on the highway.
Policy 12: Retention of public car parking	Core Policy 7: Accessibility and Transport	Core Policy 7 seeks to ensure that car parking levels help to minimise the impact of vehicle travel on the roads. GCNP Policy 12 seeks to retain existing public car parks serving the town centre to avoid further congestion caused by people looking to park on local streets.
Policy 13: Pedestrian access and walkway routes	Core Policy 7: Accessibility and Transport	Core Policy 7 seeks to rebalance the transport system in favour of more sustainable modes of transport. GCNP Policy 13 seeks to maximise the provision of pedestrian walkway routes that link up key destinations in the town.
Policy 14: Gerrards Cross Settlement Boundary	Policy GB1 - Green Belt Boundaries and the Control Over Development in the Green Belt	Policy GB1 identifies the uses that are appropriate in the green belt. GCNP Policy 14 identifies that development outside the settlement boundary should reflect these policy requirements. All land outside the settlement boundary of Gerrards Cross is green belt.
Policy 15: Protection and enhancement of Local Green Space	Core Policy 5: Open Space, Sport and Recreation	Core Policy 5 protects open space. GCNP Policy 15 specifically identifies a series of spaces that are protected on the basis of their value to the community as green spaces.
Policy 16: Trees and Landscape	Core Policy 9: Natural Environment	Core Policy 9 does not generally permit development which would harm landscape character or nature conservation interests. GCNP Policy 17 seeks to protect trees and hedgerows and landscape features generally.
Policy 17: Protection of Historic Environment	Core Policy 8: Built and Historic Environment	Core Policy 8 protects locally important heritage features. GCNP Policy 17 identifies certain locally important features for protection.
Policy 18: Settlement Gaps	Core Policy 9: Natural Environment	Core Policy 9 seeks to preserve and enhance landscapes of value. GCNP identifies a series of areas between settlements which form important visually attractive rural landscape areas that should be protected.

5. Does not breach, and is compatible with, EU obligations and Human Rights requirements.

- 5.1 The Neighbourhood Development Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act.
- 5.2 The Plan and the process under which it was made conforms to the SEA Directive (EU 2001/42/EC) and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the Regulations). In May and June 2023, a draft screening report was prepared by Colchester City Council. This was consulted on with the statutory bodies (the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England) to assist in the determination of whether or not the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan would have significant environmental effects in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.
- 5.3 In June 2022, Gerrards Cross Town Council engaged AECOM to prepare a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the draft Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan. This was consulted on with the statutory bodies and the outcomes were as follows:
 - The majority of the policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan scored positively or neutrally against the Sustainability Objectives.
 - It was recommended that Policy 4 (Orchehill Rise car park) was updated to reflect the need to investigate any potential contamination onsite and ensure appropriate remediation prior to development if necessary. This was duly included in the Regulation 16 draft of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.4 The various SEA screening documents, including the responses from the statutory bodies, has been submitted at Regulation 15 stage as part of the evidence base for the Plan.

6. Conformity with the prescribed conditions

Under Directive 92/43/EEC, also known as the Habitats Directive¹, it must be ascertained whether the draft Plan is likely to have significant effects on a European site designated for its nature conservation interest. The Directive is implemented by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Assessments under the regulations are known as Habitats Regulation Assessments ("HRA"). An Appropriate Assessment is required only if the Plan is likely to have significant effects on a European protected species or site. To ascertain whether or not it is necessary to undertake an assessment, a screening process is followed.

Burnham Beeches is a SAC European site designation which, at its closest point is 2km south-west of Gerrards Cross Parish and therefore new residential development proposed in the Plan must have due regard to Habitat regulations.

In November 2021 Gerrards Cross Town Council submitted a formal screening request regarding the need for an HRA of the draft Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan. In its screening report, Buckinghamshire Council confirmed an HRA would be needed (see Appendix A) and Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan engaged AECOM to undertake an HRA in June 2022.

In respect of HRA matters, the screening assessment identified some policies as having the potential for significant effects upon protected European designated sites – primarily upon Burnham Beeches and Chilterns SAC designations due to their nearby proximity to development which is proposed in the screening draft of the GCNP.

An (HRA) including Appropriate Assessment was duly carried out and resulted in additional wording and an addition policy being added (Policy 3: Protection of European Sites), to ensure that adequate mitigation measures were put in place. As a result of these changes, it was considered that the GCNP is unlikely to have a significant effect upon the integrity of any European site.

The HRA documents have been submitted along with the other documents required at Regulation 15 stage.

7. Conclusion

The Basic Conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the TCPA 1990 are considered to be met by the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan and all the policies therein. It is therefore respectfully suggested to the Examiner that the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan complies with Paragraph 8(1)(a) of Schedule 4B of the Act.

¹ Directive 92/43/EEC 'on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora': <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:31992L0043> (retained).