

Acton Neighbourhood Plan **Basic Conditions Statement**

To accompany the Acton Neighbourhood Plan
submission version, for examination

September 2023

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 When submitting a Neighbourhood Plan to the Local Authority (in this case Babergh District Council), it is a requirement that the Plan be accompanied by a number of supporting documents. One of these is commonly referred to as the 'Basic Conditions Statement.' Only a Neighbourhood Plan that meets each of the basic conditions can be put to referendum and if successful be used to assist in the determination of planning applications.
- 1.2 This Basic Conditions Statement is prepared for use by Babergh District Council and the Independent Examiner, to assist in making this assessment about the basic conditions.

2. Legal Requirements

Legal Requirements: The Neighbourhood Plan is compliant with The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 38A (1) & (2) and 38B (a)-(c).

Qualifying Body: The Acton Neighbourhood Development Plan being submitted by a qualifying body – Acton Parish Council. Acton Parish Council was confirmed as a qualifying body by Babergh District Council on 26th October 2021 when the Acton Neighbourhood Plan Area was designated.

A Neighbourhood Development Plan: The Acton Neighbourhood Development Plan is a neighbourhood development plan. It relates to planning matters (the use and development of land) and has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

The time-period covered: The Acton Neighbourhood Plan states the time-period for which it is to have effect (from 2022-2037) a period of 15 years.

Excluded Development: The Acton Neighbourhood Development Plan policies do not relate to excluded development. The Acton Neighbourhood Development Plan does not deal with County Matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or any other matters set out in Section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Area of the Neighbourhood Plan: The Acton Neighbourhood Development Plan relates to the Acton Parish Council's Neighbourhood Area and to no other area. There are no other Neighbourhood Plans in place relating to that Neighbourhood Area.

3. Basic Conditions

- 3.1 Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Schedule 10 of the Localism Act 2011) sets out a series of requirements that Neighbourhood Plans must meet. These ‘basic conditions’ are set out below.
- 3.2 A draft Plan meets the 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 plan (see below).
 - (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 (applies in relation to a Listed Building only insofar as the order grants planning permission for development that affects the building or its setting (not applicable in respect of the Acton Neighbourhood Plan).
 - (c) Having special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area it is appropriate to make the order (applies in relation to Conservation Areas only) insofar as the order grants planning permission for development in relation to buildings or land in the area (not applicable in respect of the Acton Neighbourhood Development Plan).
 - (d) The making of the Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development (see below).
 - (e) The making of the Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area). (see below).
 - (f) The making of the Plan does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations (see below) and,
 - (g) Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with, in connection with the proposal for the plan (see below).
- 3.3 Where applicable each of these basic conditions is addressed below. For clarification it should be noted that b) and c) above are not applicable to the Acton Neighbourhood Development Plan and refer to ‘Neighbourhood Orders’ only.

4. a) Having regard to National Policies and Advice and e) Conformity with Strategic policies in the Development Plan

- 4.1 The following table provides an appraisal of the extent to which the Acton Neighbourhood Plan has regard to national policy and is in general conformity with strategic local policy.
- 4.2 The Neighbourhood Plan policies were drafted to be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework published in July 2021 and subsequently updated in September 2023. The table below assess the degree of regard that the Acton Neighbourhood Development Plan policies have had to NPPF 2023 (Column B).
- 4.3 During the production of the Neighbourhood Plan, the strategic policies for the area were under-going revision. The Babergh Core Strategy was adopted in 2014. (Column C). The

Core Strategy replaced a number of policies from the Babergh Local Plan (2006) but not all and therefore the Acton Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed against the remaining Saved Policies from the previous Local Plan (Column D). The replacement of the Core Strategy is the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan (BMSJLP) and the assessment against the most up to date emerging policies is in (Column E).

- 4.4 The Pre-Submission Version of the BMSJLP was published for public consultation on 12th November 2020 and submitted for Examination on the 31st of March 2021. Examination hearings took place in July, September, November, and December 2021. On 16th December 2021, an Exploratory Meeting was held with the Planning Inspectors at which the District Councils agreed that it was necessary to split the Joint Local Plan into two parts. The Part 1 document will contain all strategic policies (less Policy SP04 – Housing Spatial Distribution) and all development management policies (less Policy LP30 – Designated Open Spaces). Current settlement boundaries and open space designations would be saved from existing adopted policy and carried forward into the Part 1 document. The Part 2 document would contain Policy SP04 – Housing Spatial Distribution and Policy LP30 – Designated Open Spaces and would include identifying residential site allocations; updated settlement boundaries; updated Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show people policy and any necessary allocations; and open space designations. Modifications to Part 1 of the Local Plan were published for consultation in March 2023. Further Examination hearings were held in June 2023. The Inspectors' Report was published in September 2023. Work on Part 2 of the Joint Local Plan is to begin in 2024.
- 4.5 In summary, the appraisal demonstrates that the Acton Neighbourhood Development Plan has had appropriate regard to and is in general conformity with, both national and strategic policy.

Assessment of policies in the Acton Neighbourhood Plan against National and Local strategic policies

Column A Acton Neighbourhood Development Plan Policy	Column B NPPF 2023	Column C Babergh Core Strategy 2014 (BCS)	Column D Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006) Saved Policies	Column E Babergh Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Main Modifications (March 2023 and Inspectors' Report September 2023)
<p>ACT1: New Housing Development</p>	<p>This policy is consistent with NPPF paragraph 29 which indicates that Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than that set out in the strategic policies for the area. The Adopted strategic policies for the Area do not contain any specific housing figures for the Neighbourhood Area. The Neighbourhood Plan does not make any specific allocations for new housing. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore satisfies this requirement.</p> <p>In the context of the Neighbourhood Area having extant permissions for 213 dwellings, the District stated that 213 could be considered the 'indicative' Local Housing requirement figure for the Area up to 2037.</p>	<p>This policy is consistent with Core Strategy Policy CS2 Settlement Pattern and policy which identifies the main part of Acton as a Hinterland Village in the settlement hierarchy. Hinterland villages were identified to accommodate some development to help meet the needs within them. All proposals will be assessed against Policy CS11. Site allocations to meet housing and employment needs may be made in the Site Allocations document where circumstances suggest this approach may be necessary.</p> <p>NB: No site-specific allocations were made in Acton and the Site Allocations document was overtaken by the decision to undertake a Joint Local Plan.</p> <p>Policy CS11 Strategy for Development of Core and</p>	<p>There is no directly comparable policy from the BLP 2006.</p>	<p>This policy is consistent with Joint Local Plan Policy SP03 'The Sustainable Location of new development' which establishes the principle of development within settlement boundaries and indicates that development outside of settlement boundaries will only take place where there is a specific allocation, or in a made Neighbourhood Plan or where it would be consistent with national policies (paragraph 80 of the NPPF)</p> <p>Policy ACT1 allows for development inside the defined settlement boundaries of the settlements within the Neighbourhood Area and for conversions and other policy compliant development outside, including conversions and Rural Exception Sites where these meet the criteria set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF.</p>

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	<p>NPPF Paragraph 67 defines an 'indicative' figure to be derived from consideration of factors such as the latest evidence of housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area, and the most recently available policy strategy of the LPA. There is uncertainty whether 213 is both the number of extant permissions and a figure calculated on the required basis. The figure is yet to be formally tested.</p> <p>One of the extant permissions has since expired, presenting a significant change in circumstances. It is unlikely that site will come forward for development with questions over its viability and deliverability. It was originally granted permission, contrary to local strategy, in order to contribute to a then lack of 5-year land</p>	<p>Hinterland Villages sets out specific criteria against which proposals for new housing development would need to score positively to be permitted. These include landscape and heritage impacts, need, physical relationship with the built-up area of the village.</p> <p>The settlement boundary identified in the Neighbourhood Plan is broadly comparable with that identified in the Saved Babergh Local Plan 2006, with factual updates where development has either been completed or is under construction.</p>		.

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	<p>supply. The District currently has a 7.13-year land supply.</p> <p>An independent HNA commissioned for the Plan, was extended with District consent, to assess overall housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Area. Utilising the Standard Method, and considering the required factors, its housing projections were substantially lower than the new dwellings already due from remaining extant permissions and sites under construction in the Area, so the Neighbourhood Plan satisfies the Local Housing Requirement according to the NPPF.</p> <p>Policy ACT1 indicates that the settlement boundaries will be the focus for new development within the Neighbourhood Area. The policy allows for windfall development within the</p>			

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	settlement boundary and for conversions and other policy compliant development outside, including Rural Exception Sites.			
ACT2: Design and Character	This policy reflects NPPF paragraphs 126- 130 which set out the design criteria that development should meet for example 'visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping'. 'sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change'...'create places that are safe, inclusive...with a high standard of amenity...and where crime and the fear of crime do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion or resilience.'	There is no specifically comparable policy in the Core Strategy (this was to be saved for the Development Management DPD which is now superseded by the emerging JLP).	This policy is consistent with Saved Policy HS28 of the BLP 2006 which requires that the Planning applications for infilling or groups of dwellings will be refused where the layout provides an unreasonable standard of privacy, garden size or public open space; and the proposal is of a scale, density or form which would be out of keeping with adjacent and nearby dwellings or other buildings.	This policy is consistent with JLP Policy LP24 ' <i>Design and Residential Amenity</i> ' in that both seek high quality design, which is appropriate to the area.

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	<p>Policy ACT2 sets out the design criteria that proposal should be seeking to meet and encourages design that reflects local distinctiveness. The policy is supported by specific local evidence in the form of the Acton Design Guidelines and Codes.</p>			
<p>ACT3: Housing Mix</p>	<p>This policy reflects NPPF para 62 which advises that planning policies should reflect the needs of 'those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes'.</p> <p>Policy ACT3 makes provision for families, for older people, for those requiring adaptable housing and those requiring affordable housing.</p>	<p>The policy is consistent with Core Strategy Policy CS18 which indicates that the mix and size of housing types to be provided should reflect identified local needs.</p> <p>Policy ACT3 is based on the finding of specific local evidence in the form of the Acton Housing Needs Assessment and consultation carried out with local residents. The policy specifically refers to homes at the smaller end of family housing, adaptable and affordable housing.</p>	<p>There is no directly comparable policy from the BLP 2006.</p>	<p>This policy is consistent with paragraph 06.08 of the emerging Joint Local Plan which indicates that the greatest need for housing is for 2, 3 and 4 bedroomed accommodation. Policy ACT3 which is based on specific local evidence from the Housing Needs Assessment specifically refers to smaller affordable homes.</p> <p>Policy ACT3 is based on consultation carried out with local residents and the results of the Housing Needs Assessment.</p>

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	<p>The policy is supported by specific local evidence in the form of the Acton Housing Needs Assessment and has been shaped by consultation carried out with local residents.</p>			
<p>ACT4: Biodiversity</p>	<p>This policy is consistent with paragraph 179 which seeks to safeguard local wildlife rich habitats and wider ecological networks and promotes the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks, and the pursuit of measurable net gains for biodiversity.</p> <p>Policy ACT4 requires development proposals to protect and enhance existing ecological networks and wildlife corridors, retain existing features of biodiversity value, and provide a net gain in biodiversity through the creation of new habitats, the restoration</p>	<p>This policy is consistent with Core Strategy Policy CS15: Sustainable development, which requires development proposals to respect the landscape, landscape features, streetscape / townscape, heritage assets, important spaces, and historic views.</p> <p>In addition Policy CS15 supports proposals that would increase the connectivity of habitats and the enhancement of biodiversity.</p>	<p>This policy is also consistent with Saved Policy CR07 which requires that new planting must link with existing features to provide wildlife 'corridors' and may also involve creating woodland in appropriate circumstances and saved Policy CRO8 which requires that development ensures that hedgerows are retained in full, or suitable mitigation such as replacement planting and management programmes are proposed.</p>	<p>This policy is consistent with Emerging JLP Policy SP09 '<i>Enhancement and Management of the Environment</i>' which requires development to support the enhancement and management of the environment including environmental protection measures, such as biodiversity net gain.</p> <p>In addition, Emerging JLP Policy LP16: '<i>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</i>' which seeks to protect irreplaceable features, encourage the enhancement of ecological features and networks, and secure a net gain for biodiversity.</p>

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	of existing networks and their connectivity.			
ACT5: Landscape character, important views and village gateways	<p>This policy reflects NPPF para 130 b) and c) which require planning policies to ensure that developments are 'visually attractive as a result of 'appropriate and effective landscaping'...and are sympathetic to ...the surrounding built environment and landscape setting'. In addition paragraph 174 a) of the framework which advocates 'protecting and enhancing valued landscapes' and NPPF paragraph 174 b) which recognises the need to contribute to and enhance the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'.</p> <p>Policy ACT5 identifies 11 important local views (and 4 important village gateways) which it is considered contribute</p>	<p>This policy is consistent with Core Strategy Objective 6 which seeks to protect/conservate and enhance: local character, built, natural and historic environment including archaeology, biodiversity, landscape, townscape, shape, and scale of communities; the quality and character of the countryside.</p> <p>Policy ACT5 seeks to protect the individual character and landscape setting of Acton through the identification of important public views and is consistent with this objective.</p>	<p>There is no comparable policy in the Adopted Local Plan which generally focusses on landscape within either the AONB or Special Landscape Areas. Acton does not lie within either designation.</p>	<p>This policy reflects JLP Policy LP17 'Landscape', which refers to the need for new development to conserve and enhance landscape character and to consider the topographical cumulative impact on landscape sensitivity.</p>

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	to the landscape character and setting of the parish			
ACT6: Environmental sustainability	<p>Light Pollution: This policy is consistent with NPPF paragraph 185 c) which indicates that planning policies and decision should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes, and nature conservation.</p> <p>Energy Efficiency: This policy is consistent with paragraph 153 of the NPPF which requires plans to take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change.</p> <p>Flood Risk: This policy also reflects NPPF para 159 which encourages development to be directed away from areas of flood risk and should not increase flood risk elsewhere</p>	<p>There is no specifically comparable policy in the Core Strategy in relation to light pollution or dark skies.</p> <p>This policy is consistent with Core Strategy Policy CS15: Sustainable Development which seeks the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems within new developments, requires new</p>	<p>This policy is consistent with Saved Policy EN22 of the BLP 2006, which seeks to control outdoor lighting subject to criteria covering the need for the lighting for security and safety purposes, and minimising glare and light spillage.</p> <p>Policy ACT6 seeks to cover similar issues with specific criteria</p> <p>There is no directly comparable policy from the BLP 2006.</p>	<p>This policy reflects JLP Policy LP17 which requires proposals to be 'sensitive to their landscape and visual amenity impacts (including on dark skies and tranquil areas).</p> <p>This policy is consistent with JLP Policy LP27: 'Flood risk and vulnerability' which seeks to divert development away from areas at risk of flooding and encourages development proposals to mitigate their flood risk and surface water impacts</p>

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		developments to mitigate their own flood risks and minimise surface water run-off.		
ACT7: Heritage Assets	<p>This policy reflects paragraphs 194-197 and 202 and 203 of the NPPF which requires applicants to describe and understand the significance of any heritage assets that are likely to be affected by development proposals. The special character of designated heritage assets such ... non-designated heritage assets, should be preserved and enhanced by development proposals</p> <p>Policy ACT7 sets out criteria for how the significance of heritage assets including the non-designated heritage assets can be protected and reinforced. Policy ACT7 identifies 16 Non-Designated Heritage Assets within the parish which have</p>	This policy is consistent with Policy CS15: Sustainable Development which requires development proposals to respect the landscape, landscape features, streetscape / townscape, heritage assets, important spaces, and historic views.	<p>This Policy is consistent with BLP 2006, Saved Policy CN06 Listed Buildings which seeks to ensure that Proposals for the alteration (extension or change of use of buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (including curtilage structures), should preserve the historic fabric and special character of the building and will cause the minimum possible impact.</p> <p>Policy ACT7 seeks to ensure that the design of new development complements the shape and form of the settlement and protects the historic significance of both designated and non-designated heritage assets.</p>	This policy is consistent with JLP Policy LP19: ' <i>The Historic Environment</i> ' which seeks to protect heritage assets (including Non-designated Heritage Assets) from development that would affect their heritage value and significance.

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	been assessed using the Historic England criteria.			
ACT8: Accessibility and Connectivity	<p>This policy is consistent with paragraph 92 (c) of the NPPF which supports healthy lifestyles through encouraging walking and cycling and paragraph 104 (c) which promotes walking and cycling as a preferred transport option.</p> <p>This policy seeks to provide an enhanced and joined up network of public footpaths, cycleways, and bridleways. It seeks to protect existing public rights of way and encourage new paths between and within new developments.</p> <p>Policy ACT8 encourages joined and accessible walking and cycling routes within the parish. .</p>	<p>This policy is consistent with Policy CS15: Sustainable Development which seeks to minimise the need to travel by car using the following hierarchy: walking, cycling, public transport, commercial vehicles, and cars.</p> <p>Policy ACT8 focuses on walking and cycling in the parish and seeks to encourage the increase in levels of walking and cycling through the provision of safe and attractive routes.</p>	There is no directly comparable policy from the saved policies of the BLP 2006.	This policy is consistent with JLP Policy LP29: ' <i>Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport</i> ,' which requires all new developments to maximise uptake in sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling.
ACT9: Traffic management and safety	This policy is consistent with paragraph 92 (c) of the NPPF which supports healthy lifestyles	There is no specifically comparable policy in the Core Strategy.	There is no directly comparable policy from the saved policies of the BLP 2006.	This policy is consistent with JLP Policy LP29: ' <i>Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport</i> ', which

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	<p>through encouraging walking and cycling and paragraph 104 (c) which promotes walking and cycling as a preferred transport option.</p> <p>This policy seeks to provide an enhanced and joined up network of public footpaths. It seeks to protect existing public rights of way and encourage new paths between and within new developments.</p>			<p>requires all new development proposals that are expected to, or likely to cause a significant increase in transport movements to be supported by a transport statement and if appropriate a transport assessment. Furthermore, significant impacts on highway safety or the function of the highway network must be mitigated. Impact on highway safety must not be unacceptable and the residual cumulative impacts on the road network must not be severe.</p>
ACT10: Community facilities	<p>This policy is consistent with NPPF para 93 which states 'To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space,</p>	<p>This policy is consistent with Core Strategy Objective 7: Support Rural Communities, local services and facilities which seeks to ensure that key services are retained or improved and that rural services are supported in a way which matches the identified need.</p>	<p>There is no directly comparable Saved Policy from the BLP 2006.</p>	<p>This policy is consistent with JLP Policy LP28 which supports the provision of new community facilities and also protects existing facilities unless criteria relating to viability and alternative provision can be satisfied.</p>

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	<p>cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;'</p> <p>Policy ACT10 seeks to retain existing community facilities and is also consistent with criterion c of paragraph 93 which urges planning policies to 'guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs'.</p>			
ACT11: Local Green Spaces	<p>This policy reflects NPPF paras 101-103 which advocates 'The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them'.</p> <p>Policy ACT11 identifies 15 spaces proposed for protection</p>	<p>Policy ACT11 identifies and protects 15 Local Green Spaces. There is no specific reference to Local Green Spaces within the adopted Core Strategy. Paragraph 3.3.4.1. of the Core Strategy which falls under the section relating to Environmental Enhancement indicates that open space/landscape schemes will be encouraged to reflect locally</p>	<p>This policy is consistent with Saved Policy CN03 of the BLP 2006, which seeks to resist development leading to the loss of important open space, visually important gaps in the street scene or recreational facilities within towns and villages.</p>	<p>This policy reflected JLP paragraph 16.04 from previous version of the JLP which refers to the designation of Local Green Space in neighbourhood Plans. However this is to be deleted from the JLP Part 1 and therefore there is no corresponding policy or text.</p>

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	have been assessed against the criteria in the NPPF and the assessments are in the Appendices.	distinctive landscape character and opportunities to enhance these features will be promoted.		
ACT12: Bull Lane Employment Area	This policy reflects NPPF para 81 which requires planning policies and decisions to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. It is also consistent with paragraph 84a which allows for "the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas.	Policy ACT12 is consistent with Policy CS17 of the Adopted Core Strategy which seeks to protect existing sites in employment use .	<p>This Policy is consistent with Policy EM12 <i>Bull Lane/.Acton Place</i> of the Adopted Local Plan which allocated land for employment uses in this location subject to criteria regrading highways and landscaping.</p> <p>Policy ACT12 supports the future expansion of the Bull lane employment area to the west and encourages the transport needs of employees to be included within future proposals. The Policy also provides guidance for the design of new buildings based on the guidance contained within the Acton Design Guidelines and Codes. .</p>	This policy is consistent with JLP Policy LP09 ' <i>Supporting a prosperous economy,</i> ' which supports new employment development in appropriate locations subject to criteria relating to highways, amenity, landscape and heritage.

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	Policy ACT12 supports the future expansion of the Bull Lane Employment Area subject to criteria.			
ACT13: Business and Employment Uses outside of defined employment areas	<p>This policy is consistent with paragraphs 84 and 85 of the NPPF which support the sustainable growth and expansion of businesses in rural areas and recognises that development should be sensitive to its surroundings and not have an unacceptable impact upon local roads.</p> <p>Policy ACT13 supports small scale new business provided it is appropriate to a rural area subject to criteria governing amenity, character, and traffic generation.</p>	This policy is consistent with Core Strategy Policy CS17 : Rural economy which encourages and supports rural businesses.	This policy is consistent with BLP Policy EM20: Expansion and Extension of existing employment uses, which allows for the expansion of existing businesses provide there is no conflict with environmental or residential amenity or highway safety.	This policy is consistent with JLP Policy LP09 ' <i>Supporting a prosperous economy</i> ', which supports new business and expansion of existing businesses subject to criteria relating to amenity and safety.

5. d) Achieving Sustainable Development

- 5.1 The NPPF 2023 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.¹ The appraisal of the Acton Neighbourhood Development Plan policies against NPPF policies presented above demonstrates how policies in the Neighbourhood Plan comply with the NPPF and therefore deliver sustainable development.
- 5.2. The NPPF states that the planning system has three overarching objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives.

Economic, social, and environmental objectives

- 5.3 These objectives give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles as defined by the NPPF and set out below.
- 5.4 The objectives and policies contained within the Acton Neighbourhood Plan contribute towards each of these three objectives and cumulatively contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. How they achieve this is summarised below, Unsurprisingly, there is a degree of cross-over between policies and many contribute to more than one of the sustainable development objectives e.g. ACT2: Design and character which contributes to both social and environmental objectives.
- 5.5 The plan has been formulated with Sustainable Development at its heart and looks forward with an eye on the legacy created for future generations. The vision itself refers to the parish being multi-generational, with geographically distinct settlements connected to the surrounding landscape character. The vision recognises the importance of the parish's green spaces, heritage and landscape features and seeks to put biodiversity at the heart of local decision making.

VISION	<p><i>By 2037, Acton will be a multi-generational parish of rural character, with geographically distinct settlements which remain well-connected to the ancient rolling farmland in which they sit.</i></p> <p><i>Green spaces, heritage and landscape features of importance are protected and enhanced, and wildlife flourishes because its conservation is influential in local decision-making.</i></p> <p><i>New development in the parish is:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>community-led and shaped to meet identified needs</i>• <i>well-connected and safe</i>• <i>of a scale and form that respects the character of the parish</i> <p><i>Residents enjoy accessible community facilities which support their local needs as well as good connections to next level services in neighbouring settlements.</i></p>
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¹ Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly.

5.6 The plan contains a set of ten objectives which are identified in order to deliver the vision. These are:

Housing

Objective A: To maintain the distinct and separate rural identity of Acton and prevent its physical coalescence with neighbouring settlements.

Objective B: To ensure that new development is of a high quality and is well designed to be in keeping with the form, character, and landscape setting of the village.

Objective C: To provide homes of an appropriate size and type which meet the current and future needs of all sectors of the Acton community.

Environment

Objective D: To ensure that new development adequately protects, maintains and enhances the wide diversity of wildlife habitats, features and species resident in the parish.

Objective E: To preserve and enhance the landscape setting of the parish by identifying important views that contribute to the character of the parish and protect them from development.

Objective F: To safeguard the future of the parish through the promotion of environmentally sustainable measures within all new developments.

Objective G: To ensure that new development respects and protects Acton's built heritage and historic environment.

Access and Community

Objective H: To ensure that Acton residents have good access and safe connections to services both within the village and to those in nearby settlements.

Objective I: To protect the existing important community services and facilities in the parish and support their improvement and enhancement.

Business

Objective J: To support the appropriate development and expansion of new and existing business within the designated industrial area.

5.7 The objectives each support development whilst recognising the importance of safeguarding and enhancing the special qualities that contribute to the specific character of Acton.

5.8 The following table helps to further demonstrate the Plan's comprehensive contribution to sustainable development.

NPPF Sustainable Development	Contribution through Acton Neighbourhood Plan Policies
<p>NPPF 2023 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 co-ordinating the provision of infrastructure.</p>	<p>Objective J: To support the appropriate development and expansion of new and existing business within the designated industrial area.</p> <p>Policy ACT12: Bull Lane Employment Area supports the future expansion of this employment area and supports proposals which would increase business activity on the site by new or existing small and medium enterprises.</p> <p>Policy ACT13: Business and employment uses outside of defined employment areas provides support for small scale businesses appropriate to a rural area including the re-use of redundant or unused historic or farm buildings.</p>
<p>NPPF 2023 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.</p>	<p>Objective B: To ensure that new development is of a high quality and is well designed to be in keeping with the form, character, and landscape setting of the village.</p> <p>Objective C: To provide homes of an appropriate size and type which meet the current and future needs of all sectors of the Acton community.</p> <p>Policy ACT1: New housing development provides support for new development within the defined development boundaries and of a scale compatible with the level of services and facilities in the village.</p> <p>Policy ACT2: Design and Character requires new development to fit in with the existing rural character of the parish and reflect its local distinctiveness.</p> <p>Policy ACT3: Housing Mix supports a mix of housing that meets local needs and contributes to retaining Acton's existing sense of community. The policy is supported by the Housing Needs Assessment.</p> <p>Policy ACT8: Accessibility and connectivity encourages new developments to contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents by encouraging walking and cycling and the provision of safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes.</p> <p>Policy ACT9: Traffic management and safety requires new development to maximise the opportunities for sustainable transport and considers the levels of traffic generated by new development along with safety considerations.</p> <p>Policy ACT10: Community facilities seeks to resist the loss of an existing community facility unless a suitable alternative can be provided. The policy provides support</p>

NPPF Sustainable Development	Contribution through Acton Neighbourhood Plan Policies
	<p>for maintaining, developing and enhancing the services offered by existing community facilities.</p> <p>Policy ACT1: Local Green Spaces identifies 15 Local Green Spaces in the parish which have a demonstrable value to the local community and are protected from development. .</p> <p>Policy ACT12: Bull Lane Employment Area supports the future expansion of this employment area and encourages proposals to address the amenity and transport needs of employees.</p> <p>Policy ACT13: Business and employment uses outside of defined employment areas provides support for small scale businesses appropriate to a rural area subject to criteria governing impacts such as traffic generation, landscape, and amenity.</p>
<p>NPPF 2023 An environmental role: 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.</p>	<p>Objective A: To maintain the distinct and separate rural identity of Acton and prevent its physical coalescence with neighbouring settlements.</p> <p>Objective B: To ensure that new development is of a high quality and is well designed to be in keeping with the form, character, and landscape setting of the village.</p> <p>Objective D: To ensure that new development adequately protects, maintains and enhances the wide diversity of wildlife habitats, features and species resident in the parish.</p> <p>Objective E: To preserve and enhance the landscape setting of the parish by identifying important views that contribute to the character of the parish and protect them from development.</p> <p>Objective F: To safeguard the future of the parish through the promotion of environmentally sustainable measures within all new developments.</p> <p>Objective G: To ensure that new development respects and protects Acton’s built heritage and historic environment.</p> <p>Policy ACT1: New housing development provides support for new development within the defined development boundaries and seeks to maintain the distinct physical and visual separation between various parts of the built-up area of the parish.</p> <p>.</p>

NPPF Sustainable Development	Contribution through Acton Neighbourhood Plan Policies
	<p>Policy ACT2: Design and Character provides detailed design guidance for new development to ensure that it is well designed, of a good quality and fits in with the existing rural character of the parish. The policy is supported by the Acton Design Guidelines and Codes.</p> <p>Policy ACT4: Biodiversity expects new development to protect and enhance existing ecological networks, corridors and priority species. The policy aspires towards a 20% net gain for biodiversity and identifies two specific ecological corridors.</p> <p>Policy ACT5: Landscape character, important views and village gateways seeks to protect the landscape character and setting of the parish. The policy identifies 11 important public views which new development is expected to take account of and seeks to maintain the rural character of the village gateways.</p> <p>Policy ACT6: Environmental Sustainability provides support for development which provides for the future sustainability of the parish. The policy provides guidance for energy efficiency and seeks to minimise flood risk and light pollution.</p> <p>Policy ACT7: Heritage Assets expects new development to complement the shape and form of the settlement and protect both designated and on designated heritage assets. The policy identifies 16 Non-Designated Heritage assets which have been assessed using the Historic England criteria.</p> <p>Policy ACT11: Local Green Spaces identifies 15 Local Green Spaces within the parish that are to be protected from development. Each space has been assessed against the NPPF criteria.</p>

6. f) Compatibility with EU Obligations

- 6.1 The statement below demonstrates how the Acton Neighbourhood Development Plan does not breach and is compatible with EU obligations. The United Kingdom formally left the European Union on the 31st of January 2020, which was followed by an 11-month transition period that expired on 31st December 2020. Basic Condition (f) of the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations 2012 requires that the making of a Neighbourhood Plan should not breach nor be incompatible with European Obligations. These include those relating to environmental matters such as Habitats and Species.
- 6.2 Babergh District Council recommends that the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening processes be undertaken at Pre-Submission stage. Both assessments were carried out by Place Services in April 2023.
- 6.3 The SEA Screening Report takes into account the latest regulations, guidance and court judgements relating to this area including CJEU People Over Wind v Coillte Teoranta C-323/17 which rules that mitigation measures cannot be taken into account when carrying out a screening assessment to decide whether a plan or project is likely to result in significant effects on a Habitats site. The HRA Screening Report therefore does not consider mitigation measures within the assessment of Likely Significant Effects resulting from the Acton Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Screening report also considers the impact of the judgement CJEU Holohan C- 461/17, which imposes more detailed requirements in the competent authority at Appropriate Assessment Stage.
- 6.4 The SEA screening report produced by LUC notes that:
- “Policy ACT1 (New Housing Development) does not allocate sites for additional dwellings, but it does state that new development in Acton over the proposed plan period will be focused within the existing defined settlement boundaries of Acton and Newman’s Green.*
- Although the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any sites for new development, it does propose a new settlement boundary for the main built-up area of the parish. It is based substantially on the existing adopted settlement boundary of the Core Strategy with the addition of the Tamage Road and the Clay Hall Place development sites, which are nearing completion.”*
- 6.5 The Screening report concludes at paragraph 2.35 and 2.36 :
- “ The Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision, objectives and 13 planning policies to shape development in the parish up to 2037 and decision makers will need to consider the criteria of these policies when determining future applications in the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan does not directly impact on land use through the allocation of sites for housing or other forms of development.*
- On this basis, it is considered that the Acton Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and that full SEA is therefore not required.*
- On this basis, it is considered that the Acton Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and that full SEA is therefore not required.”*
- 6.6 Consultation on the Screening Report was carried out with the Environment Agency (EA), Historic England (HE), and Natural England (NE) in May 2023. Natural England (23rd May 2023) and Historic England (23rd May 2023) both responded and

confirmed that they agreed with the scoping conclusion of the Screening Report that Strategic Environmental Assessment was not required.

- 6.7 Babergh therefore issued its SEA Screening Direction Notice in May 2023. At Section 5 of the Screening Determination Notice states :

“The LUC Screening Report noted that the Plan “sets out a vision, objectives and 13 planning policies to shape development in the parish up to 2037” and that “decision makers will need to consider the criteria of these policies when determining future applications in the parish.” It also noted that the Plan “does not directly impact on land use through the allocation of sites for housing or other forms of development”. On that basis, it concluded that “the Acton Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects and that full SEA is therefore not required.

Consultation on the Screening Opinion was carried out with Natural England, Historic England, and the Environment Agency. Written responses were received from Historic England and Natural England. Both agreed with the conclusion that SEA is not required. Their responses are set out in Appendix 1. No formal response was received from the Environment Agency.”

- 6.8 Furthermore, section 6 of the Screening Determination states:
“In the light of the SEA Screening Opinion (April 2023) prepared by LUC, and the responses from the two statutory bodies, it is determined that the Acton Neighbourhood Plan 2022 - 2037 does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004”.

Human Rights

- 6.9 In addition, the Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act 1998. The accompanying Consultation Statement sets out the process followed in terms of community involvement and how comments on the draft plan have been addressed. Owners of land proposed to be identified as either a Non Designated Heritage Asset or Local Green Space were contacted prior to the Pre-Submission Consultation Stage and asked for their views. A number responded through the public consultation exercise and this is shown in the Consultation Statement.

7. g) Prescribed matters

- 7.1 An additional basic condition is prescribed under Regulation 32 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as follows:

'The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is not likely to have any significant effect on a European Site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (2)) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations 2007 (3)), (either alone or in combination with other plans and projects).'

- 7.2 The Screening for Habitats Regulation Assessment was carried out at the same time as the SEA Screening. The HRA Screening Report produced by Place Services on behalf of Babergh District Council in April 2023 stated that:

"The Acton Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any sites for residential, employment or other forms of development. Instead, policies set out criteria that any residential and/or employment development that comes forward must meet. Should schemes which are supported by the Acton Neighbourhood Plan move forward, individual project-level HRAs should be carried out where necessary to determine any likely significant effects.

Since none of the policies in the Acton Neighbourhood Plan are expected to directly result in development, they will not result in significant effects on European sites. Therefore, no likely significant effects are predicted as a result of the plan either alone or in combination, and it has not been necessary to carry out HRA screening by types of potential impacts."

- 7.3 Consultation on the Screening Report was undertaken with Natural England in May 2023. Natural England Confirmed in their response dated 23rd May 2023, that they agreed with the conclusion of the Screening Report and that an Appropriate Assessment was not required.

- 7.4 Babergh District Council's Screening Direction Notice was issued in May 2023 and Section 4 of the Notice states:

" The Screening Report concludes that: "At the screening stage of HRA, no likely significant effects are predicted on European sites, either alone or in combination with other policies and proposals".

"It goes on to say that: "An Appropriate Assessment is not required for the Acton Neighbourhood Plan as none of the polices will result in development and likely significant effects from the Plan can therefore be ruled out, both alone or in-combination with other plans or projects."

"Consultation on the Screening Report was carried out with Natural England. In their responses (see Appendix 1) they agreed with the conclusion reached."

- 7.5 Section 5 of the Notice concludes as follows:

“In light of the HRA Screening Report (April 2023) prepared by LUC, and the response to this from the statutory consultee, it is determined that the Acton Neighbourhood Plan 2022 – 2037 is ‘screened-out’ for further assessment under the Habitats Regulations 2017 and that an Appropriate Assessment is not required”.

7.6 The Qualifying Body (Parish Council) have therefore satisfied the additional Basic Condition.