

**LEIGHTON LINSLADE
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
2024 - 2042**

BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT

April 2026

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1.INTRODUCTION

The Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.1. This Statement has been prepared by ONH Planning for Good on behalf of Leighton Linslade Town Council (“the Town Council”) to accompany its submission of the Leighton Linslade Neighbourhood Plan (“the LLNP”) to Central Bedfordshire Council (“CBC”), under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (“the Regulations”).
- 1.2. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Town Council, the ‘Qualifying Body’, for the Neighbourhood Area (“the Area”), [which coincides with the boundary of the Parish of Leighton-Linslade] shown on Plan A below. CBC designated the Neighbourhood Area on 26 June 2024.
- 1.3. ONH Planning for Good has provided professional planning advice and support to the Town Council throughout the project, alongside occasional help from officers of CBC.

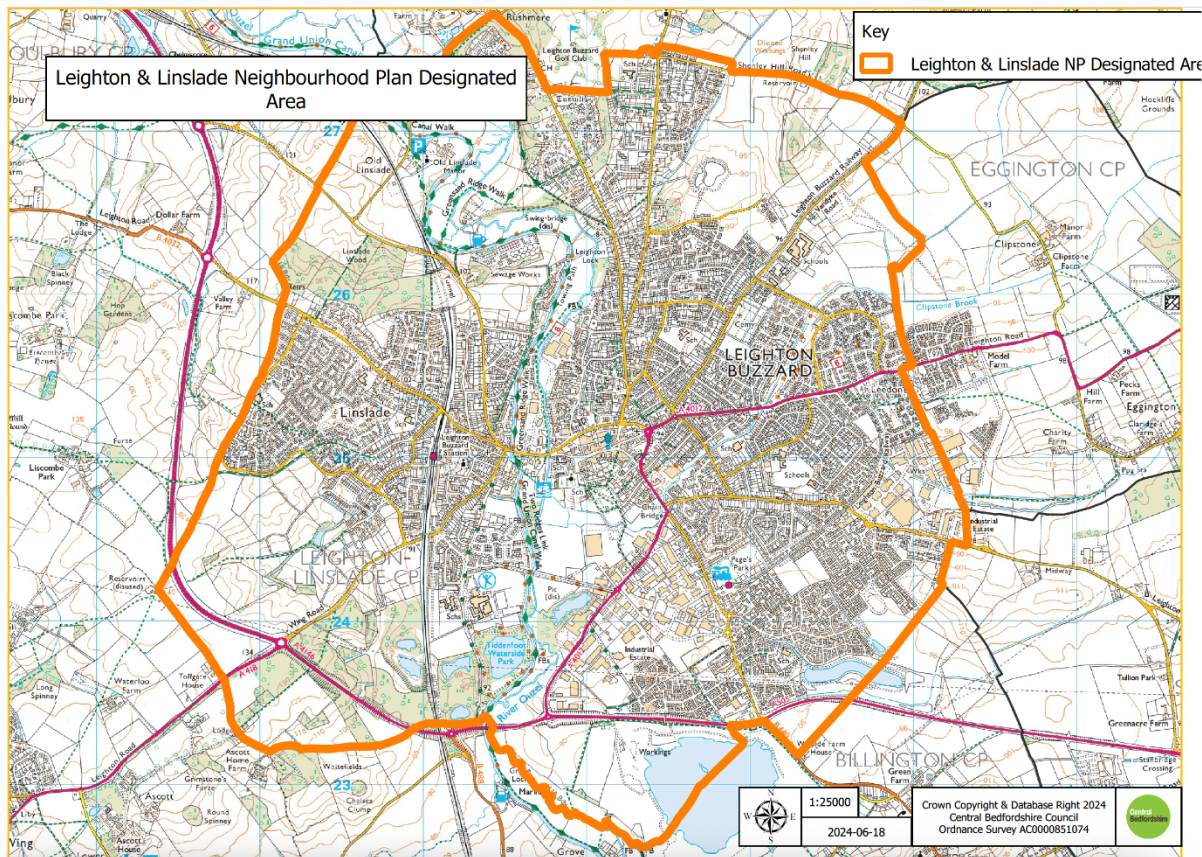


Figure 1. Plan A: Leighton Linslade Designated Neighbourhood Area

- 1.4. The Neighbourhood Plan thirteen land use policies (LL1 to LL13), which are defined on the Policies Map where they apply to a specific part of the Area. These policies all fall within the scope allowed by s38B(A1) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and none relate to ‘excluded development’ as defined in s61K of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. As per s38B(1) of the 2004 Act, the Neighbourhood Plan specifies a plan period of 2024 to 2042 and does not relate to more than one designated neighbourhood area.

1.5. Per s38B(2B) of the 2004 Act:

So far as the qualifying body considers appropriate, having regard to the subject matter of the neighbourhood development plan, the plan must—

(a) be designed to secure that the development and use of land in the neighbourhood area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change, and

(b) take account of any local nature recovery strategy, under section 104 of the Environment Act 2021, that relates to all or part of the neighbourhood area, including in particular—

(i) the areas identified in the strategy as areas which—

(A) are, or could become, of particular importance for biodiversity, or

(B) are areas where the recovery or enhancement of biodiversity could make particular contribution to other environmental benefits,

(ii) the priorities set out in the strategy for recovering or enhancing biodiversity, and

(iii) the proposals set out in the strategy as to potential measures relating to those priorities.

1.6. The Town Council considers that the Neighbourhood Plan does not contain policy proposals that would undermine the development and use of land in the neighbourhood area contributing to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. The LLNP embeds climate change mitigation and adaptation throughout its vision, objectives and policies, including:

- Supporting energy efficiency and carbon reduction
- Promoting sustainable transport and reduced car dependency
- Enhancing green infrastructure and biodiversity
- Planning for flood risk and resilience to extreme weather

1.7. Furthermore, per that same provision, the Town Council has taken into account the Bedfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025) as relevant to the scope of the LLNP, integrating its priorities into local policy and promoting habitat connectivity and biodiversity enhancement.

1.8. Per s38B(2C) of the 2004 Act, the Town Council considers that none of the Neighbourhood Plan policies are inconsistent with or (in substance) repeat any national development management policy.

The Basic Conditions

1.9. The statement addresses each of the four 'Basic Conditions', which are relevant to this plan, required of the Regulations and explains how the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act. It is noted that these provisions were amended by s99 of the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023 which came into force on 25 March 2026.

1.10. Paragraph 8 (as amended) defines the Basic Conditions thus:

A. Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Development Plan;

B. The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan contributes to the achievement

of sustainable development;

EA. The making of the neighbourhood development plan would not result in the development plan for the area of the authority proposing that less housing is provided by means of development taking place in that area than if the neighbourhood development plan were not to be made;

F. The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, assimilated obligations;

FA. Any requirements imposed in relation to the Neighbourhood Development Plan by or under Part 6 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (environmental outcomes reports) have been complied with; and

G. Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Neighbourhood Development Plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

2.BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The decision to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan for Leighton Linslade was made by Leighton Linslade Town Council in June 2024, following an initial community engagement exercise in February 2024 which confirmed strong public interest in shaping the future of the town through the planning system. The key driver of this decision was a sense of wanting to plan positively for the future of the Parish, with the encouragement of Central Bedfordshire Council to local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. Leighton-Linslade is a historic and growing market town in southwest Bedfordshire, straddling the Grand Union Canal and River Ouzel, constrained by the Green Belt, national infrastructure projects and historic strategic decision making. The Town Council considers that the neighbourhood plan would improve the way future development proposals were managed.
- 2.2 A Steering Group was constituted comprising Town Council members and local community volunteers. The group was formally appointed in September 2024 and delegated responsibility for the day-to-day preparation of the Plan, with the Town Council retaining final approval authority as the qualifying body, including of the Submission plan in September 2025 and the Submission Plan now.
- 2.3 The Town Council has engaged extensively with the community and key stakeholders throughout the preparation of the Plan. An informal engagement exercise in March to May 2025 tested emerging policy thinking, and the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation ran from 13th October to 30th November 2025. The nature and outcome of these activities are set out in the separate Consultation Statement.
- 2.4. The Town Council has also received occasional support from officers of CBC since the start of the project to collate and examine the evidence base, to design and iterate policy proposals and to define the proper relationship between the Neighbourhood Plan and the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan.

3. CONDITION (A): REGARD TO NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

3.1 The LLNP has been prepared with full regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is mindful of the PPG in respect of formulating Neighbourhood Plans. As demonstrated in Table A, this plan has taken to opportunity to revise development plan policies to reflect the amendments to the Use Classes Order introduced in September 2020 as they apply to this Area (PPG 13-009c). In overall terms, there are four NPPF paragraphs that provide general guidance on neighbourhood planning, to which the Neighbourhood Plan has directly responded:

General Paragraphs

3.2 The Town Council believes the Neighbourhood Plan “support(s) the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans ... and ... shape(s) and direct(s) development that is outside of these strategic policies” (§13). It considers the Neighbourhood Plan contains only non-strategic policy proposals or proposals that refine strategic policy to fit the circumstances of the Area without undermining the purpose and intent of those strategic policies (§18). It considers that the Neighbourhood Plan sets out more “detailed policies for specific areas” including “the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out other development management policies” (§29).

3.3 The Town Council considers that its Neighbourhood Plan has provided its communities the power to develop a shared vision for the Area that will shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, albeit in a modest way, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. The Neighbourhood Plan contains no site allocation proposals nor any other policies that will result in less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area (§30). In this regard, the NPPF provisions of meeting local housing needs (as per §69/§70) are therefore not relevant to this Neighbourhood Plan. The LLNP contains policies LL1 to LL5 that positively plan for brownfield development in the town centre and at identified locations, collectively providing a planning framework capable of supporting the delivery of new homes as part of a wider mix of uses. This approach does therefore not result in less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area (§30). The Plan is underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This is considered to be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned (§32).

Specific Paragraphs

3.4 Each policy engages one or more specific paragraphs of the NPPF (2024, amended February 2025). Those that are considered to be of the most relevance and substance are identified in Table A below. Table A2 has also been prepared, set out in the same format, to show conformity with the draft NPPF (published for consultation December 2025) Whilst the Plan may be examined against the current NPPF, the additional table has been prepared in the event that the new NPPF is published over the coming weeks and no transitional arrangements are put in place. It demonstrates how the Plan is consistent with the Plan Making and Decision-Making policies contained therein.

Table A: Neighbourhood Plan and NPPF Conformity

Policy No.	Policy Title	Key NPPF Paragraphs and Commentary
LL1	Centre of Town Renewal	<p>§90 Ensuring the vitality of town centres. The policy supports the role that town centres play in the heart of communities, and takes a positive approach to “growth, management and adaptation.”</p> <p>Additionally, this promotes healthy and safe communities by §96.a “promoting social interaction... through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layout that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods.” §96.b. “are safe and accessible... high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and” §96.c. “enable and support healthy lives... provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure... local shops... and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”</p> <p>§87 and addressing the locational requirements of different economic sectors including “clusters or networks of... creative... industries”.</p> <p>§203 The policy sets out a positive strategy for the “conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment” with clear policies that sustain and enhance heritage features, in the use of old buildings, and the design of new.</p>
LL2	Leighton Buzzard Town Centre	<p>§90 Ensuring the vitality of town centres. The policy supports the role that town centres play in the heart of communities, and takes a positive approach to “growth, management and adaptation.” The policy promotes their long-term vitality by “allowing them to grow and diversity... allows a suitable mix of uses (including houses) and reflects their distinctive characters.”</p> <p>§203 The policy sets out a positive strategy for the “conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment” with clear policies that sustain and enhance heritage features, including shopfronts.</p> <p>Additionally, this promotes healthy and safe communities by §96.a “promoting social interaction... through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layout that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods.” §96.b. “are safe and accessible... high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and” §96.c. “enable and support healthy lives... provision of safe and accessible... local shops... and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”</p>

LL3	Bridge Meadow / Canal Quarter	<p>§125 gives substantial weight to the value of “using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs.” While recognising that “some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation...”</p> <p>§90 Ensuring the vitality of town centres. The policy supports the role that town centres play in the heart of communities, and takes a positive approach to “growth, management and adaptation.” Additionally, this promotes healthy and safe communities by §96.a “promoting social interaction... through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layout that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods.” §96.b. “are safe and accessible... high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and” §96.c. “enable and support healthy lives... provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops... and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”</p> <p>§161/162 the policy takes into account flood risk and supports “appropriate measures to ensure the future health and resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures” and §164 ensuring “that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems;” and includes flood risk mitigation measures consistent with §176.</p> <p>§203 The policy sets out a positive strategy for the “conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment” with clear policies that sustain and enhance heritage features, taking the opportunity to promote the history of the canal.</p>
LL4	Linslade Cluster	<p>The Policy seeks to make effective use of land around the railway station as a sustainable location §115 by prioritising “sustainable transport modes... taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and it’s location.”</p> <p>The policy supports §125 in giving “substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs”</p> <p>Additionally, this promotes healthy and safe communities by §96.a “promoting social interaction... through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layout that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods.” §96.b. “are safe and accessible... high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and” §96.c. “enable and support healthy lives...</p>

		<p>provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure... local shops... and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”</p> <p>§203 The policy sets out a positive strategy for the “conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment” with clear policies that sustain and enhance heritage features around the Heritage Focus Area and the Conservation Area.</p>
LL5	Land South of the High Street	<p>§90 Ensuring the vitality of town centres. The policy supports the role that town centres play in the heart of communities, and takes a positive approach to “growth, management and adaptation,” through the regeneration of this underused brownfield location.</p> <p>It also seeks to make effective use of land in accessible locations as set out in §115 by prioritising “sustainable transport modes... taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and it’s location.”</p> <p>The policy supports §125 in giving “substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs” through its encouragement for a mixed use scheme in this key town centre location.</p> <p>The policy also complies with §109 in so much as Transport, including parking, is considered from the earliest stage of the proposal, ensuring that appropriate levels of parking are retained.</p> <p>Additionally, this policy promotes healthy and safe communities by §96.a “promoting social interaction... through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layout that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods.” §96.b. “are safe and accessible... high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and” §96.c. “enable and support healthy lives... provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure... local shops... and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”</p> <p>In conformity with §203, the policy also sets out a positive strategy for the “conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment” with clear policies that sustain and enhance heritage features around Listed Buildings and the Conservation Area.</p>
LL6	Housing Mix and Type	<p>The policy seeks to support a mixed community and ensure a well-balanced housing stock with a particular focus on supplying a mix of homes (§61) that reflect the housing needs of the area (§8b NPPF),</p>

		The policy also seeks to ensure sufficient supply of homes for persons with accessibility needs (§63), through the requirement for new development to be accessible and adaptable to specified standards.
LL7	Local Community Assets	The policy aligns with the NPPF's emphasis on planning positively for community facilities by c) 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 (§98c)
LL8	Green and Blue Infrastructure	The policy aligns with the NPPF's emphasis on conserving and enhancing the natural environment, promoting biodiversity, and supporting ecosystem services (§187-188 & §192). By enhancing green infrastructure, the policy supports the NPPF's guidance on providing networks of accessible high-quality open spaces and opportunities for recreation, while allowing well designed development that maintains separation character and green infrastructure links (§135). Enhancing the river and canal corridors accords with (§187e) which states that “development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions” The identification of the green and blue infrastructure network and planning positively for its retention and improvement supports the plan in avoiding increased vulnerability to a range of impacts arising from climate change (§164a)
LL9	Local Green Spaces	The policy designates Local Green Spaces in accordance with §106-108, having demonstrated each space meets the criteria in §107. The policy resists all development proposals that will undermine the essential character of designated areas, unless there are very special circumstances as set out in §153, to justify why consent should be granted.
LL10	Active and Sustainable Travel	The policy requires that transport issues are considered from the earliest stages of development proposals so that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued (§109). Specific opportunities to protect and enhance Public Rights of Way are identified (§105), with the intention of creating “genuine choice of transport modes” including walking, cycling and by bus (§110). By supporting active travel, the policy contributes to the NPPF's objective of promoting healthy communities (NPPF, para. §96c) and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (§164b) and pollution through transport choices (§187e)

LL11	Infrastructure Priorities	<p>The policy effectively identifies five priority infrastructure needs including a Neighbourhood Health Centre, multi-purpose indoor space, exhibition space, creative space, and indoor sports courts – and directs developer contributions towards their delivery. This is planning “positively for the provision and use of ... local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.” (§98a) as part of a strategy to “improve, health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community”</p> <p>The inclusion of the sports facilities enables §96.c. “and support healthy lives... through the provision of... sports facilities...”</p>
LL12	Education	<p>The policy effectively anticipates the restructure of the education system to a two-tier system in the unitary area are seeks to ‘plan positively for the provision and use of ... local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.’ (§98a) by anticipating that some educational buildings may no longer be needed, while others will expand and planning positively to encourage proposals that will help address this anticipated need. (§100) The policy also ensures are playing fields no longer needed for educational use are “retained for the benefit of the community” (§98c)</p>
LL13	Energy Efficiency	<p>This policy intends to ensure new developments are ‘zero carbon ready’ and deliver buildings which meet design expectations on efficiency for whichever standard of building is adopted, therefore contributing to a movement towards a low carbon economy (§8c) and mitigating and adapting to climate change (§162) and ensure that new development is planned for in ways that “reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through... design” (§164b)</p>

Table A2: Neighbourhood Plan and NPPF(2026) Conformity

Policy No.	Policy Title	Key NPPF Paragraphs and Commentary
LL1	Centre of Town Renewal	<p>These policies supports Policy TC2: Development in town centres; specifically <i>the benefits of: a. Supporting the overall vitality and viability of the centre, including where this can be achieved through the diversification of uses, intensification and provision of residential accommodation (provided this would not conflict with policies in the development plan for specific locations); and b. Improving or retaining access to local shops and other facilities which provide day-today services for the local community.</i></p>
LL2	Leighton Buzzard Town Centre	

LL3	Bridge Meadow / Canal Quarter	These policies, as all others, are consistent with policy PM5: Neighbourhood plans PM5:1.b. <i>“Setting out policies which address particular local issues... may cover wider issues such as the provision of infrastructure and community facilities, regeneration opportunities, design requirements (including design codes), local environmental improvements and the conservation of local heritage assets.”</i>
LL4	Linslade Cluster	
LL5	Land South of the High Street	
LL6	Housing Mix and Type	This has been enacted through a locally specific spatial framework which identified the Wider town centre and three cluster areas, which provides clear guidance for development in each spatial area. The spatial framework was developed with consideration of DP3: Key principles for well-designed places and HC1: Planning for Healthy Communities and TR1:1 Vision-led approach to planning for transport.
LL7	Local Community Assets	The policy seeks to meet housing needs, secure affordable housing provision and support a mixed community. This policy has been developed on the basis of a housing needs assessment which identified a specific needs for smaller and medium dwellings, and seeks to diversify Leighton Linslade housing stock that reflect the housing needs of the area (HO1: Assessing the need for homes and HO5.1.c. Meeting the needs of different groups), The policy also seeks to ensure sufficient supply of homes for persons with accessibility needs as recommended by the HNA (HO5.1.b.), through the requirement for new development to be accessible and adaptable to specified standards.
LL8	Green and Blue Infrastructure	The policy aligns with the NPPF's emphasis on planning positively for community facilities by guarding against the unnecessary loss of valued services (HC6: Retention of key community facilities and public service infrastructure). It is important to recognise these facilities in policy in order to ensure that decision making policies can be applied accurately in the future, particularly HC6: “Development proposals should not result in the loss of key community facilities and public service infrastructure serving a local area...” The policy is also consistent with PM5: Neighbourhood plans PM5:1.b. may “Setting out policies which address particular local issues... may cover wider issues such as the provision of infrastructure and <u>community facilities.</u> ”
		The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Network, as shown on the Biodiversity Map for the purpose of applying the National Decision-Making Policy N2 on using green infrastructure to secure multiple benefits and minimise impacts on biodiversity and supporting the Bedfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This policy is in conformity with Policy N2: Improving the natural environment “1. To contribute positively to the natural environment and support nature’s recovery development proposals should: a. Consider the

		<p>environmental qualities of land proposed for development, including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced...”</p> <p>The identification of the green infrastructure network and planning positively for its retention and improvement supports the plan in avoiding increased vulnerability to a range of impacts arising from climate change (DP3: Key principles for well-designed places 1.c. Climate, CC3: Adaptation to climate change.)</p> <p>The policy is also consistent with PM5: Neighbourhood plans PM5:1.b. “Setting out policies which address particular local issues... may cover wider issues such as the provision of infrastructure and community facilities, regeneration opportunities, design requirements (including design codes), <u>local environmental improvements</u> and the conservation of local heritage assets.”</p>
LL9	Local Green Spaces	<p>The policy designates Local Green Spaces in accordance with HC2: Local Green Space, having demonstrated each space meets the criteria in HC2. The policy resists all development proposals that will undermine the essential character of designated areas, unless there are very special circumstances as set out in HC8 “Development affecting Local Green Space”, to justify why consent should be granted.</p> <p>The policy is also consistent with PM5: Neighbourhood plans PM5:1.b. “Setting out policies which address particular local issues... may cover wider issues such as the provision of infrastructure and community facilities, local environmental improvements...”</p>
LL10	Active and Sustainable Travel	<p>This policy is aligned with policy TR1: Vision-led approach to planning for transport “1. Sustainable transport should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making, so that it is reflected in the vision for the plan area and its specific proposals, and forms an integral part of a plan’s strategy for creating well-designed, sustainable, inclusive and popular places...”</p> <p>It also accords with CC2: Mitigation of climate change “1. In order to contribute to climate change mitigation and the transition to net zero, development proposals should, where relevant to the proposal: 30 In line with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008. 27 a. Be located where a genuine choice of sustainable transport modes exists, and improve opportunities for walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, in accordance with policies TR3 and TR4;”</p> <p>The policy is also consistent with PM5: Neighbourhood plans PM5:1.b. “Setting out policies which address particular local issues... may cover wider issues such as the provision of infrastructure and... local environmental improvements...”</p>

		<p>This is done through locally-mapped and specific opportunities to protect and enhance Public Rights of Way, Cycle routes and opportunities for improvement are identified, with the intention of creating “genuine choice of transport modes” including walking, cycling and by bus (TR3.1). The needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility is specifically considered (TR4.1.c.).</p> <p>By supporting active travel, the policy contributes to the NPPF's objective of promoting healthy communities (HC1: Planning for healthy communities) and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (CC2: Mitigation of climate change).</p>
LL11	Infrastructure Priorities	<p>This policy is aligned to Policy HC4: Proposals for new and improved community facilities and public service infrastructure “1. Substantial weight should be given to the benefits of providing new or improved public service infrastructure or community facilities. 2. Local planning authorities, developers and public service providers should collaborate in a positive and proactive manner to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications for community facilities and public services infrastructure are submitted. Where appropriate, they should also engage with local communities in the design of proposals, including with children and families where new or improved facilities for play are involved, so that developments can reflect user needs and be inclusive.”</p> <p>It is also consistent with Policy PM5: Neighbourhood plans PM5:1.b. “Setting out policies which address particular local issues... may cover wider issues such as the provision of infrastructure and community facilities....”</p> <p>The policy effectively identifies five priority infrastructure needs including a Neighbourhood Health Centre, multi-purpose indoor space, exhibition space, creative space, and indoor sports courts – and directs developer contributions towards their delivery. This is planning positively for the provision and use of local services. The health centre and sports centre also contribute towards HC1: Planning for healthy communities.</p>
LL12	Education	<p>This policy is aligned to Policy HC1: Planning for healthy communities “1.2. In planning for community facilities and public service infrastructure, authorities should engage proactively with local communities and service providers, taking into account relevant strategies to improve health, address inequalities and foster social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community. They should attach considerable importance to providing for sufficient education facilities (including early years, school and post-16 provision)...”</p>

		<p>It also aligns with Policy HC7: Development affecting existing recreation facilities “1. Development proposals should not result in the loss of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, other formal and informal play space and allotments, unless: a. An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or b. The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and/or quality, in a location which offers comparable or improved accessibility for the community it serves; or c. The development is for alternative sports, play or other recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.”</p> <p>It is also consistent with policy PM5: Neighbourhood plans PM5:1.b. “Setting out policies which address particular local issues... may cover wider issues such as the provision of infrastructure and community facilities, regeneration opportunities... local environmental improvements.”</p>
LL13	Energy Efficiency	<p>This policy is aligned to Policy CC1: Planning for climate change “1. Development plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating climate change and supporting the transition to net zero³⁰. They should also take a proactive approach to adapting to climate change”</p> <p>It is also consistent with policy CC2: Mitigation of climate change “1. In order to contribute to climate change mitigation and the transition to net zero, development proposals should, where relevant...”... c. Use design approaches which conserve energy and other resources in accordance with policy DP3(1)(c); “</p> <p>It is also consistent with policy DP3: Key principles for well-designed places 1.c. “Climate: contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation and the transition to net zero, by using building layouts, building orientation, massing, landscaping and materials which conserve energy and other resources, and which minimise risks from the impacts of climate change including overheating;”</p> <p>It is also prepared in support of policy PM5: Neighbourhood plans PM5:1.b. “Setting out policies which address particular local issues... may cover wider issues such as... local environmental improvements...”</p> <p>This policy intends to set out specific locally measurable criteria that will ensure new developments are ‘zero carbon ready’ and deliver buildings which meet design expectations on efficiency for whichever standard of building is adopted, therefore contributing to a movement towards mitigating and adapting to climate change and ensure that new development is planned for in ways that “conserve energy and other resources” (CC2:1.c.)</p>

4. CONDITION (B): CONTRIBUTING TO ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 A screening request was submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) in September 2024 to inform its 'screening opinion' on the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the European Directive 2001/42/EC and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended). A final screening opinion ('Determination') was issued on 27th January 2025 by CBC, following a consultation period with the statutory bodies, as per those Regulations. The Determination statement concluded that an SEA is required (see Section 6 below for further details).

4.2 A separate SEA Report sets out the environmental effects of the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. There is no legal requirement for Neighbourhood Plans to have a sustainability appraisal, however the 'basic conditions' require a qualifying body to demonstrate how its plan will contribute to the achievements of sustainable development in a systematic way. In terms of environmental effects, the SEA Report concluded that each policy in the LLNP either contributes positively to the achievement of sustainable development or is neutral in its impact on one or more of the three sustainability themes. No policy produces a significant adverse effect. The LLNP as a whole, therefore meets condition B.

4.3 The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was prepared by AECOM and published by the qualifying body along with the Pre-Submission Plan in October 2025 for consultation. AECOM was unable complete the final Report due to the ending of the Government's Neighbourhood Plan Support Programme, which funded the production of the Pre-submission Report. In preparation of the submission version of the Plan it is confirmed the only material policy changes of relevance to the SEA are the modification of LL5 Land South of the High Street which is no longer considered a site allocation policy and the removal of LL10: Chiltern Beechwoods, which was considered to duplicate existing CBC Mitigation Strategy. As such, it is considered that these would not alter the conclusions of the pre-submission SEA work with its findings remain unchanged:

"The LLNP aligns with other local and regional plans, including the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan and the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC Mitigation Strategy. No significant adverse cumulative or in-combination effects have been identified. Many policies are expected to deliver co-benefits, such as LL8 (Green and Blue Infrastructure), which supports biodiversity, climate resilience, and landscape quality"

4.4 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has also been undertaken. The HRA concludes that, with appropriate policy provisions, the making of the LLNP is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. A copy of the final HRA is submitted separately.

4.5 A wider view of the sustainability performance of the policies is set out in Table B below by identifying the potential of each policy to lead to significantly positive (++) **dark green**), minor positive (+) **light green**), neutral (0) **yellow**), minor adverse (-) **orange**) or significant adverse (-- **red**) effects, taking into account the proposed mitigation measures.

Table B: Neighbourhood Plan and Sustainable Development

Policy No.	Policy Title	Social	Economic	Environmental	Commentary
LL1	Centre of Town Renewal	++	++	+	Centre of Town Renewal sets a positive spatial framework for regeneration, supporting delivery of homes, employment, health, culture and active travel. Heritage-led approach provides strong social and economic benefits with carefully managed environmental impacts.
LL2	Leighton Buzzard Town Centre	++	++	+	Town Centre policy protects and enhances retail vitality, community uses and cultural activity. Heritage protection and greening measures deliver positive environmental outcomes.
LL3	Bridge Meadow / Canal Quarter	++	++	++	Bridge Meadow/Canal Quarter is an important brownfield regeneration site. Waterside design principles, flood risk management and green infrastructure enhance the environmental quality of the site.
LL4	Linslade Cluster	++	+	++	Linslade Cluster policy supports active travel, station connectivity and the local centre function, delivering social and environmental benefits through reduced car dependency.
LL5	Land South of the High Street	++	+	+	Land South of the High Street provides a framework for mixed-use regeneration delivering community facilities, cultural spaces, health infrastructure and housing. Heritage-led design protects the Conservation Area.
LL6	Housing Mix and Type	++	0	0	Housing Mix policy prioritises smaller and medium-sized accessible homes, addressing identified local demographic needs and supporting first-time buyers, renters, and downsizers.
LL7	Local Community Assets	++	0	0	Community Assets policy protects valued facilities and promotes new provision, maintaining essential social infrastructure for the growing population.
LL8	Green and Blue Infrastructure	+	0	++	Green and Blue Infrastructure policy aligns with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, promotes biodiversity net gain, urban cooling, natural flood management and health and wellbeing.

LL9	Local Green Spaces	++	0	++	Local Green Space designations protect community-valued spaces, delivering recreational, ecological and public health benefits.
LL10	Active and Sustainable Travel	++	+	++	Active Travel policy protects and enhances the walking, cycling and public transport network, reducing car dependency and carbon emissions.
LL11	Infrastructure Priorities	++	+	+	Infrastructure Priorities policy directs contributions for future facilities towards five identified community needs, including health, culture, sport and indoor recreation, directly improving quality of life, providing an economic benefit through investment in facilities and reducing the need to travel outside of the parish to access such facilities.
LL12	Education	+	0	0	The education policy supports the expansion and re-use of educational facilities to meet the needs of the growing population.
LL13	Energy Efficiency	0	0	++	Energy Efficiency policy requires Sustainability Statements and encourages zero-carbon-ready design, directly contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

5. CONDITION (EA): HOUSING PROVISIONS AND THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 5.1 Section 99 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA), which came into force on 25 March 2026, amended paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to replace the former Condition (E) – which required general conformity with strategic policies of the development plan – with a new, more focused Condition (EA). It is no longer necessary to assess general conformity with all strategic policies of the development plan; other than in relation to their effect on adopted housing policies.
- 5.2 Condition (EA) requires the Town Council to demonstrate only that the making of the LLNP would not result in the development plan for the area proposing that less housing is provided by means of development taking place in the neighbourhood area than if the plan were not to be made.

The Development Plan for Leighton Linlade

- 5.3 The development plan for the Leighton Linlade Neighbourhood Area currently comprises the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015–2035 (adopted July 2021) (“the Local Plan”). CBC is preparing a new Local Plan to cover the period to 2042, but this is at an early stage: the first formal Regulation 18 consultation (Issues and Options) is scheduled for early 2026 and no housing allocations have been made under the emerging plan.
- 5.4 The adopted Local Plan allocates the following residential sites within or directly serving the Leighton Linlade Neighbourhood Area:
- Northern Chamberlains Barn: 175 dwellings
 - Land South of Soulbury Road: 55 dwellings
 - The Chiltern-Hunt land: 138 dwellings
- 5.5 In addition, the strategic Eastern Leighton Linlade Urban Extension (ELLUE), referenced in the Local Plan, is delivering a substantial quantum of housing to the east of the town, with multiple phases under construction or with reserved matters approval. The LLNP does not conflict with the delivery of these strategic allocations.

How the LLNP Meets Condition (EA)

- 5.6 The LLNP does not make formal housing site allocations. However, it does plan positively for housing by providing a policy framework that supports and enables residential development as part of mixed-use regeneration and brownfield sites in the town centre.
- 5.7 The LLNP does not reduce, restrict, or constrain the delivery of any housing allocated or anticipated by the Local Plan. It does not impose policies that would make it harder to build homes in the area. On the contrary, it creates a positive planning framework that should make it easier to bring forward brownfield sites that have remained undeveloped for many years.

6. CONDITION (F), (FA) and (G): COMPATABILITY WITH ASSIMILATED OBLIGATIONS

Condition (F): Compatibility with Assimilated Obligations

- 6.1 CBC provided a screening opinion on 27th January 2025 that has determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment, in accordance with Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessments of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), which implement EU Directive 2001/42/EC (now retained in UK law as assimilated EU law) is required, following consultation with statutory bodies as per those Regulations
- 6.2 As set out in Section 4 the Town Council has met its obligations in relation to the EU Directive 2001/42 in respect of assessing the potential for significant environmental effects of the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Final SEA Report is published as a separate document for submission and examination.
- 6.3 The Town Council has also met its obligations in relation to the habitats provisions of EU Directive 92/43/EEC (and the associated Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)). In this regard, the Town Council has provided CBC with all the necessary information it required for the purposes of determining whether an Appropriate Assessment was required and provided a Habitats Regulation Assessment. The Habitats Regulations Assessment concludes that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the 2017 Regulations) either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
- 6.4 In respect of Directive 2008/98/EC – the Waste Framework Directive – the Neighbourhood Plan does not include any policies in relation to the management of waste, nor does the area include a waste management site. On that basis, this Directive is not considered relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.5 In respect of Directive 2008/50/EC – the Air Quality Directive – the Neighbourhood Plan includes some policies relevant to Air Quality. These policies are tested in accordance with national policy and guidance relevant to their content. The policies are not considered to breach the requirements of the Air Quality Directive as they comprise small-scale interventions and do not negate from the framework for measurement and improvement of air quality set in the Directive.

Condition (FA): Environmental Outcomes Reports

- 6.6 In respect of Condition FA, the Environmental Outcome Report system provided for by the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023 has not yet been implemented through secondary legislation. Condition (FA) is therefore not yet operative and no further action is required in this regard.

Condition (G): Prescribed Conditions and Compliance

6.7 The Town Council has carried out the designation, preparation and consultation of the LLNP in full accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). In particular:

- The Leighton Linlade Neighbourhood Area was designated by CBC on 26 June 2024.
- The Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation ran from 13 October to 30 November 2025, providing the required minimum six-week consultation period.
- Representations received were carefully considered and the Plan was revised accordingly, as documented in the Consultation Statement.
- The Plan does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area and the Town Council is the qualifying body for the designated area.
- None of the policies relate to excluded development as defined by the Regulations.

6.8 The Town Council has been mindful throughout the preparation of the LLNP of the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights, as given effect by the Human Rights Act 1998. It considers the LLNP complies with the Human Rights Act. The Plan has been subject to extensive engagement with those people local to the area who could be affected by its policies, and their views have been taken into account in finalising the Plan.

7. SUMMARY

- 7.1 In Section 3 it is considered that each of the policies have had full regard to national policy, as set out in the NPPF (2024, updated February 2025), and that the Plan is also consistent with the emerging draft NPPF (December 2025). There is no incidence of two or more national policies being in tension, nor of the Town Council having to strike a balance between them. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan meets Condition (A).
- 7.2 In Section 4 it is considered that each of the policies either contributes to the achievement of sustainable development or is neutral in its impact. No policy produces a significant adverse effect across one of more of the three sustainability themes. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan, as a whole, meets Condition (B).
- 7.3 In Section 5 it is considered that the policies will not result in the development plan for the area proposing that less housing is provided by means of development taking place than if the plan were not to be made. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan meets Condition (EA).
- 7.4 In Section 6 it is considered the making of the Neighbourhood Plan accords with all assimilated obligations and conditions, that condition (FA) is not yet operative, and that all prescribed procedural requirements have been met. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan meets Conditions (F), (FA) and (G).