

2022 - 2033



Steeple Bumpstead
Neighbourhood Plan

Regulation 16 Consultation Version
March 2024





Foreword

A Neighbourhood Plan is a relatively new type of planning document, introduced in the Localism Act 2011, which allows local people to have a say in the future growth and development of their community.

The Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan sets out a number of policies all of which have the aim of ensuring that the Parish of Steeple Bumpstead will be a place where residents enjoy an excellent quality of life and people feel valued. Heritage assets will be protected; countryside, wildlife and valuable views will be safeguarded and celebrated. Homes, businesses and other facilities will meet the needs of a vibrant, affordable and safe rural community.

The Plan and its supporting background documents were prepared, following significant public consultation, by a Steering Group set up by Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council and consisting of:

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Jonathan Borges (Chair) | Robert Suckling | Peter Hill |
| Kerry Barnes | Philip Whittome | Roy Swaby |
| Charles Nash | Rebecca Denning | |

In addition the following have made valuable contributions to the work of the Steering Group:

Cherie Lee

Ian McKenzie

Sophia Girvan

On behalf of the Parish of Steeple Bumpstead I would like to thank everyone who has been involved with the project. I would also like to thank the following for their assistance and support:

- Jan Stobart of the Rural Community Council of Essex;
- Tim Parton and Charlotte Steele of DAC Planning;
- Bobby Browne of Wynne-Williams Associates Ltd; and
- Paul Avery, Stela Kontogianni, Ben Castell and Olivia Carr of AECOM Ltd.

Finally, the Parish Council and the Steering Group would like to thank all those residents who have participated in the public consultation events, responded to the Residents' Survey and shown support for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Jon Borges

Chair, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council

February 2024

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1 Introduction

1.1 About Neighbourhood Plans

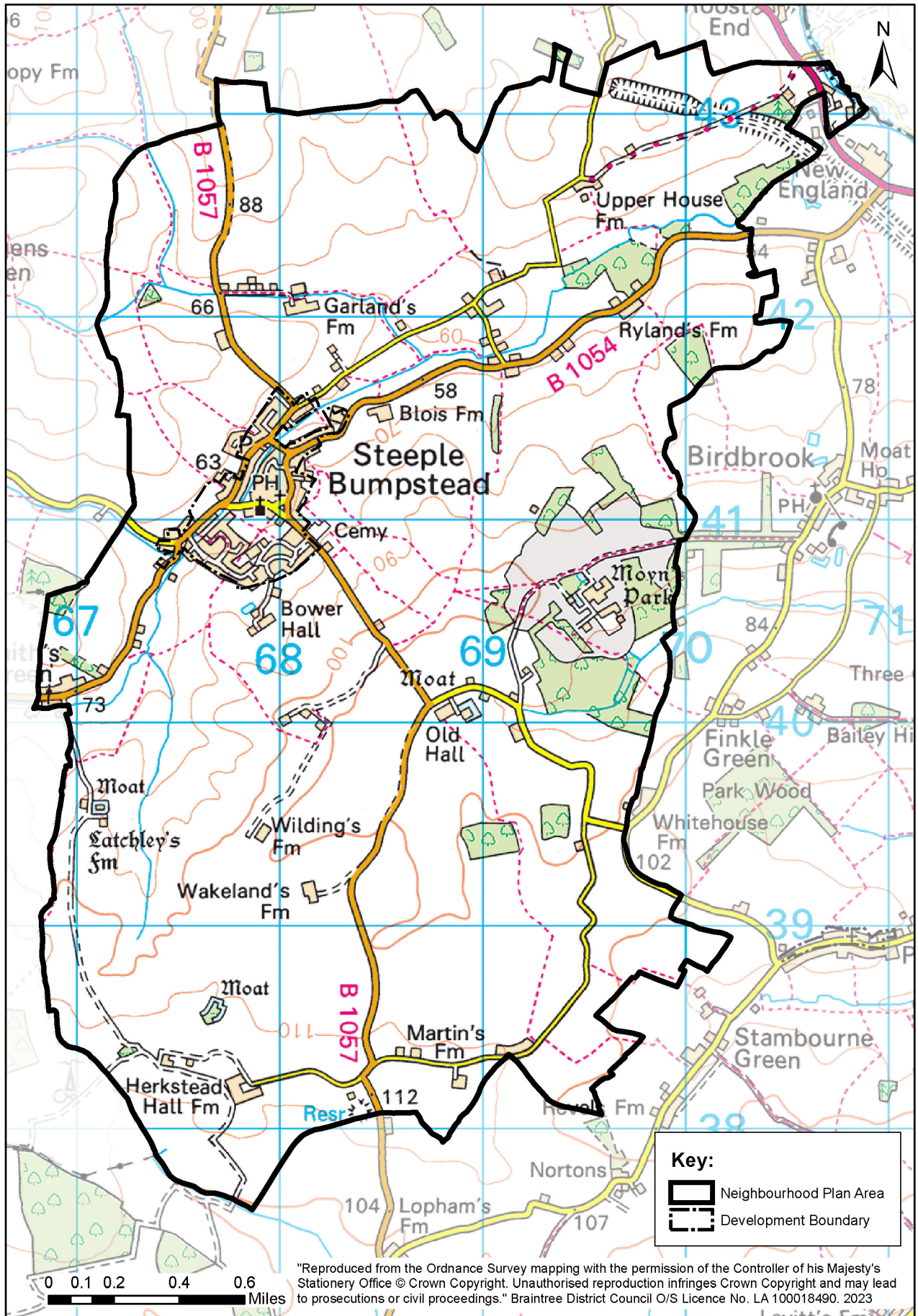
- 1.1.1** The Localism Act 2011 introduced a number of measures allowing communities to shape the future of their area and to deliver the sustainable development that they need. One of these measures is the Neighbourhood Plan. This is a relatively new type of planning document, which can set policies for the use of land and rules for local development. A Neighbourhood Plan must comply with higher level planning policy at district, national and European level and must be based on evidence. Following community consultation, it will be examined by an independent Examiner and must be approved by residents at a local referendum. The completed Plan will become part of the development plan for the local area and will be used in determining planning applications.
- 1.1.2** A Neighbourhood Plan cannot be used to stop development. There is a requirement for new homes nationally and every Neighbourhood Plan must plan for new growth.
- 1.1.3** Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council resolved to prepare a Plan so that the community could work together to shape the future of the village and have a say about where new homes should go and what they should look like, how the local economy should be supported, how the village's heritage could be preserved, how the countryside and open spaces of the village should be protected and how local facilities and infrastructure could be improved.
- 1.1.4** The Council consulted on the draft plan in accordance with Regulation 14 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012) as amended, between 30th March and 17th May 2023, and comments made during that Consultation have now been reflected in this version.

1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan Period

- 1.2.1** The Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan will be for the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2033.

1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 1.3.1** The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is the whole of the civil parish of Steeple Bumpstead, as shown in Map 1. The local planning authority, Braintree District Council (BDC), formally designated the parish as a Neighbourhood Area on 8 March 2018.



Map 1 Neighbourhood Plan Area

2 Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan

2.1 The Plan Process

2.1.1 The table below shows an overview of the Plan preparation process.

| Date | Stage |
|--------|--|
| 2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Group formed Evidence gathering Public Consultation events Workshops and training |
| 2019 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents' Survey conducted in September 2019 Draft format of Plan agreed as a framework |
| 2021/2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of potential housing sites and other issues Consultation draft Plan prepared |
| 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-Submission Draft Plan published for statutory six week public consultation period in March 2023 Updating of Plan based on feedback from Consultation |
| 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of Plan to BDC, together with Consultation Statement and Basic Conditions Statement Submission Draft Plan published for statutory six week consultation period Independent Examiner's Report received [date] Referendum of Electors [date] Plan "made" by BDC |

2.1.2 The Plan process has been led by Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council through a small Steering Group made up of Parish Councillors and local residents. Preparatory work included attending meetings, workshops and conferences to learn more about the planning system and finding out residents' views through a comprehensive Residents' Survey. The Group has had the benefit of free advice and support from the Rural Community Council of Essex, funded by Braintree District Council and was awarded a grant to enable it to employ a number of planning and other consultants.

2.2 Legal Requirements

2.2.1 A Neighbourhood Plan must comply with a number of conditions, known as the Basic Conditions. These require that the Plan:

- has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
- contributes towards the achievement of sustainable development

- is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area, and
- is compatible with Convention Rights defined in the Human Rights Act 1998

National Policies and Advice

2.2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) is the principal document in which national planning policies are contained. Government guidance is provided on the Planning Practice Guidance website.

Sustainable Development

2.2.3 The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

2.2.4 In Steeple Bumpstead, sustainable development means that which:

- reduces the environmental impact of development through the reuse of previously developed land and buildings wherever possible;
- increases opportunities to walk, cycle, or use public transport;
- contributes towards the creation of a balanced community that meets the needs of its residents with appropriate and accessible infrastructure and facilities; and
- supports the local economy and the creation of jobs in order to reduce travel to other areas.

Using the Policies within this Plan

2.2.5 None of the Policies included in the Neighbourhood Plan are intended to be restrictive in respect of new development; rather, where there is an element of conditionality expressed in any relevant Policy wording, this is simply intended to support and encourage best practice in that Policy area, supported by the evidence base presented in respect of each such Policy.

Development Plan for the area

2.2.6 The local planning authority for the area is Braintree District Council (BDC).

2.2.7 The Braintree District Local Plan is formed of two parts: The strategic Section 1 (S1LP) which is shared by all three North Essex local authority areas of Braintree, Colchester, and Tendring, and the Section 2 (S2LP) providing policies only for Braintree District. The Section 1 Local Plan was adopted in February 2021, setting out the overall housing requirement for the three local planning authorities. The Section 1 Plan includes policies on strategic cross boundary issues including infrastructure and housing numbers and includes proposals for three new Garden Communities. The Section 1 Local Plan identifies the objectively assessed need for Braintree as 716 new dwellings per year over the plan period of 2013 to 2033.

2.2.8 Section 2 contains policies, maps and sites for development, housing, employment, regeneration etc within Braintree District Council. It was adopted on 25th July 2022.

2.2.9 Once 'made', the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the development plan for the area alongside the BDC Local Plan. Policies within both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan should therefore be considered collectively in the determination of development proposals in the area.

Human Rights

2.2.10 The Neighbourhood Plan must comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 and be compatible with the rights protected by the European Convention of Human Rights, including those dealing with privacy, discrimination and property.

2.2.11 The Basic Conditions Statement explains in detail how the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan complies with the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements.

2.2.12 The Consultation Statement provides a comprehensive report showing who was consulted and how, along with evidence of how comments were considered and taken into account in the preparation of the Plan.

Sustainability Appraisal

2.2.13 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been prepared. Although a SA is not a legal requirement, it was felt that it would assist with the assessment of the social and economic impacts of the Plan as well as its environmental impacts giving a more complete and rounded assessment. It will also help to demonstrate how the Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development, one of the basic conditions that the Plan must comply with.

2.2.14 During the Plan preparation process, the draft policies were assessed against the sustainability objectives that are addressed by the SA, which thus demonstrates how the Plan meets the sustainability objectives of the Parish.

Relevant Planning Inquiry

2.2.15 There was an extensive planning Inquiry held in July 2017 concerning a previously proposed major housing development just outside the village boundary, which was adjudicated by Julia Gregory BSc (Hons), BTP, MRTPI, MCMI, an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. A number of detailed reports were produced for this Inquiry from a variety of fully qualified experts in a range of relevant areas, including heritage, landscape and transport, and a number of these reports were considered for the evidence base for this Neighbourhood Plan, as was Inspector Gregory's Decision.

2.3 Community Engagement

2.3.1 The Steering Group has informed and consulted the community widely throughout the process. Engagement has included consultation events held in the village hall and during car boot sales and a comprehensive Residents' Survey. This was distributed in September 2019 to all 1,280

local residents on the Electoral Register for the Parish, and completed Surveys were received back from 453 residents - a response rate of over 35%, unusually high for an exercise of this nature.

3 About Steeple Bumpstead

3.0.1 This section contains a description of Steeple Bumpstead and outlines the key issues that have influenced the Plan.

3.1 Countryside & Environment

3.1.1 Steeple Bumpstead is a country village surrounded by beautiful scenery and landscapes, typical of the area. This is characterised by rolling arable farmland and hills surrounding steep valleys with small streams, with settlements located in the valleys. The key landmarks are the churches with towers or spires within views into and across the valleys. From the tops of the hills there are characteristic views across the valley and into it, especially on the approach to Steeple Bumpstead from the north and the south. Historically, development within Steeple Bumpstead was below 70m above sea level.

3.1.2 Steeple Bumpstead lies within the Stour Valley Project Area (SVPA), which has been described as "a distinctive landscape with agriculture and wildlife at its core that retains its natural beauty and special qualities"; "... one of England's finest landscapes with its riverside meadows, picturesque villages and rolling farmland"; and "... a high quality landscape and a benefit to all those that live, visit or work in the area." The village is part of the Hundred Parishes Society.

3.2 Heritage

3.2.1 The village has a long and rich history. The name Bumpstead is thought to derive from the Anglo-Saxon for "the place where reeds grow", reflecting its location at the bottom of a valley. The village is recorded in the Domesday Book.

3.2.2 Steeple Bumpstead originated as a valley side settlement alongside the Bumpstead Brook, which is a tributary of the River Stour. The brook runs south-west to north-east through the centre of the village. The historic core of the settlement is focused on the valley floor and its edges.

3.2.3 There has been a long history of non-conformist belief in the village which continues to this day in the Congregational Church. In 1527 John Tibauld and eight other village residents were seized and taken before the Bishop of London, charged with meeting together in Bower Hall, the former stately home in the parish and residence of the Bendyshe family, to pray and read a copy of the New Testament. Although the non-conformists in the village were encouraged by the powerful Bendyshe family, even their influence could not save Tibauld. He was burned at the stake in a field along the Blois Road, leading from Steeple Bumpstead to New England, known as the 'Bloody Pightle'.

3.2.4 Having fallen into ruin after use as a 'concentration camp' in the First World War, Bower Hall itself was finally demolished in 1926 and the materials sold off. The great staircase found its way to the United States.

- 3.2.5** A Moot Hall, known as ‘the Old Schole’, symbolises Steeple Bumpstead. Built in 1592 by the inhabitants on land rented from the Crown, in the 1830s when it was ‘a school for farmers’ sons’ the villagers forcibly took possession of it, disputing the claim of George Gent of Moyns Park to have the right to appoint the headmaster. Eventually an ecclesiastical court upheld the villagers’ claim. Parish Council meetings to this day take place in the Moot Hall.
- 3.2.6** For years the village was a hotbed of trouble with many ‘riots’ and unrest during the agricultural strikes in 1914 and the 1920s. The national agricultural strike of 1914 was started nearby in Castle Camps and the troubles spread to Steeple Bumpstead, which became a stronghold for the strikers.
- 3.2.7** Steeple Bumpstead was one of the first villages in the country to have its own village policeman when county policing came into being in Essex. In 1840, William Rattigan was one of the very first Essex Police Officers to be assigned a village beat. There was a police officer stationed in the village for 160 years from 1840 to 2000 when the last ‘bobby’, Ray Howard, retired.
- 3.2.8** There is a designated Conservation Area within the historic core of the village, which contains a number of high quality buildings, including a total of 21 listed buildings, most dating from the 16th and 17th centuries.
- 3.2.9** The village, especially the Conservation Area, is rich in the traditional style of buildings, construction methods and materials typical to the area, including oak framed houses, lath and plaster, Essex boarding, traditional red bricks, clay pegtiles, and slate and thatched roofs.

3.3 Housing

- 3.3.1** The population of the village according to the 2011 Census was 1,627, with 659 households. The village had a higher proportion of couple households with no children (under age 65) – 26% of households in the Parish are couple households with no children – compared to the District and East of England proportions of 20% and 19% respectively. 79% of homes were owner-occupied, 9% social rented, 10% private rented and 2% living rent free. 64% of the housing stock in Steeple Bumpstead are 1-3 bed dwellings, and unusually 33% of the housing stock are bungalows, giving good housing supply for the older population.
- 3.3.2** There are 62 existing affordable homes in Steeple Bumpstead. There are 54 Greenfields Community Housing homes in the village and 8 Hastoe Housing Association homes at Banstock Field. There is also managed accommodation for retired people at Bendyshe Court on Bower Hall Drive.
- 3.3.3** Factors such as location, design, character, density, affordability and housing mix are all important with regards to any future development. There is a desire to preserve the distinctive characteristics of the village. Residents confirm that they would prefer development on infill sites within the village development boundary and on brownfield sites rather than on greenfield sites.

3.4 Local Economy

- 3.4.1** Steeple Bumpstead was historically an agricultural community. Whereas the number of people employed in agriculture has dropped significantly over the years, the whole village is still surrounded by farmland growing a mix of cereals, oilseed rape and beans, alongside the production of sheep and a few cattle.
- 3.4.2** Businesses that provide employment include the two village pubs, the Mace store and Post Office, the Primary School and a number of small businesses sited at the local business centre in Blois Road. There is a nursery and day centre next to the business centre.
- 3.4.3** The nearest significant employment centres outside the village are at Haverhill, Saffron Walden and Cambridge, and a number of residents commute to London.
- 3.4.4** Residents wish to encourage new businesses, within the limitations of availability of business premises, and wish to retain and support existing businesses in the village.

3.5 Community Facilities

- 3.5.1** Steeple Bumpstead has a number of community facilities and services used and much valued by residents.
- 3.5.2** These include a local village store, a Post Office, a petrol station, an antiques shop, and a part-time library in the Moot Hall. There are two pubs, The Fox and Hounds and The Red Lion. There are two churches, the Church of England parish church of St. Mary the Virgin and the Congregational Church, each offering various activities for all ages. Steeple Bumpstead has a primary school, Steeple Bumpstead Primary School.
- 3.5.3** There is a large Village Hall located centrally which hosts a number of club activities. There is an active bowls club situated at a dedicated clubhouse on Hempstead Road.
- 3.5.4** There are two open public spaces within the village, Humphrey's Meadow adjacent to Claywall Bridge and the much larger Camping Close in the centre of the village. There are two children's play areas, on the Camping Close and at North Crescent, with dedicated play equipment.

3.6 Highways and Transport

- 3.6.1** Like many rural villages, Steeple Bumpstead has narrow roads and lanes. Inappropriate parking is often a problem in the village e.g. across private driveways, on pavements, at junctions and in narrow roads. There is a perception that vehicles drive through the village too quickly, and pedestrians feel vulnerable in several places where they have to walk in the road. There are concerns about heavy goods vehicles driving through the village roads.
- 3.6.2** Car ownership and use is high in Steeple Bumpstead, mainly because of the very poor level of availability of public transport, or other forms of transport such as cycling, from the village to local destinations offering employment, retail and other facilities.

- 3.6.3** Steeple Bumpstead contains a number of local facilities. However, all higher order facilities, including bulk food retail, comparison shopping, cinemas, personal business, higher order leisure and sports facilities, hospitals, secondary education and other further and higher education require travel to surrounding urban areas including Haverhill, Saffron Walden, Bury St Edmunds and Cambridge.
- 3.6.4** In her Decision published on 6 September 2017 relating to the major planning Inquiry referred to above, which refused planning permission for that development, Inspector Gregory stated that "I acknowledge that frequency of rural public transport will not be the same as in urban areas, but the level of provision is so small as to be extremely limited. All but the most organised and determined persons would be dissuaded from using it".

4 Vision

4.0.1 The following Vision statement is a result of issues raised during community engagement:

The Parish of Steeple Bumpstead will be a place where residents enjoy an excellent quality of life and people feel valued. Heritage assets will be protected; countryside, wildlife and valuable views will be safeguarded and celebrated. Homes, businesses and other facilities will meet the needs of a vibrant, affordable and safe rural community.

4.0.2 The Residents' Survey identified these as key characteristics which residents wished to preserve and extend, as indicated by the responses below.

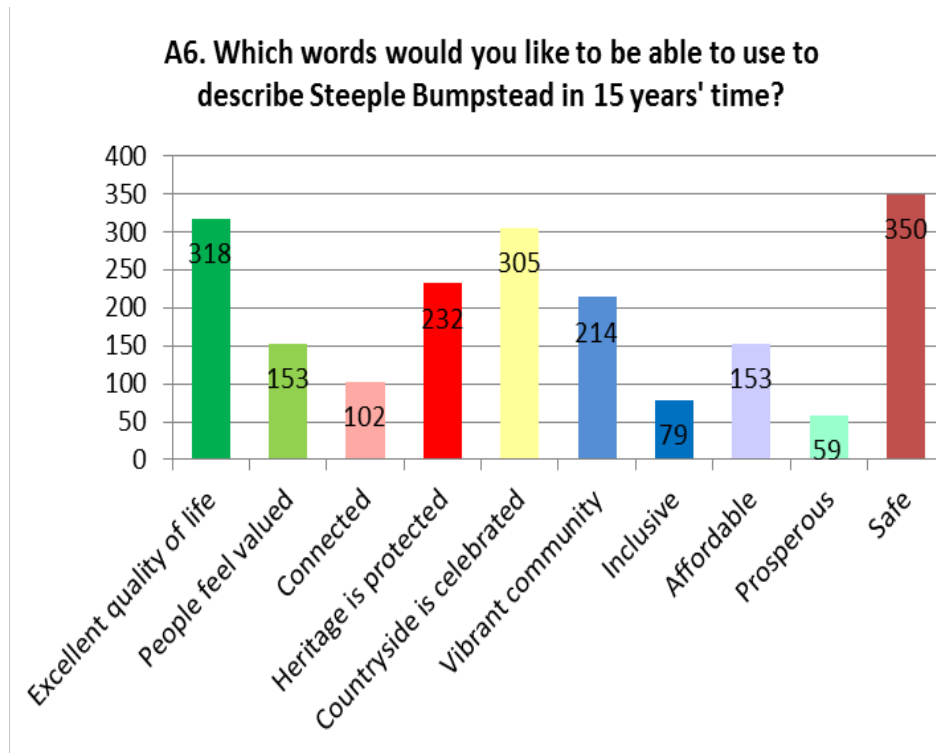


Figure 1

5 Planning Objectives and Policies

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1** This part of the Plan contains the Planning Objectives and Policies that will help to meet the community's vision for Steeple Bumpstead and address key issues that have been raised during consultation. Policies relate to the use and development of land.
- 5.1.2** Once the plan has been submitted to Braintree District Council it becomes their plan and part of the Local Development Plan against which planning applications are assessed. Applications are also determined with reference to national policy in the NPPF and the Local Plan.
- 5.1.3** Each policy category is preceded by an introductory section, which outlines the background and intent of the policy and refers to relevant evidence contained in the supporting documents and other evidence base material, as listed in the Appendix.
- 5.1.4** Appearing throughout this section are comments and graphs indicating the results of the extensive Residents' Survey undertaken in late 2019, where these illustrate the community's expressed view with regard to relevant questions for each topic.

5.2 Countryside and Environment

Objectives

- To protect and respect the landscape, wildlife and countryside of the Parish, and cherish its natural beauty.
- To minimise the impact of any future development on the landscape and scenic beauty of the area.

Background and Intent

5.2.1 Steeple Bumpstead and its surrounding landscape are typical of the area. A local landscape assessment was undertaken in 2006, the Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments. This study identified eight landscape character types (LCT) across the whole study area which were then broken down into seventy Landscape Character Areas (LCA) that reflect distinctive variations in local character. Each LCA is a geographically distinct example of a landscape character type. The parish of Steeple Bumpstead includes three LCAs, LCA B2 Hempstead Farmland Plateau to the south of the village, LCA A2 Stour River Valley which encompasses the village of Steeple Bumpstead itself, and LCA B3 Bumpstead Farmland Plateau to the north of the village. The key characteristics of these LCAs are identified as:

- 'Rolling arable farmland and hills surrounding steep valleys with small streams.
- Settlements located in the valleys.

- Number of interesting and colourful vernacular buildings within small linear settlements.
- Overall strong sense of tranquillity and sense of place.'

Visual characteristics are noted as:

- 'The key landmarks are the churches with towers or spires within views into and across the valleys.
- The farmsteads provide landmarks on the top of the rolling hills.'

5.2.2 The experience of travelling through the landscape is defined by the winding roads as they pass down into the valleys and up the other side. From the tops of the hills there are characteristic views across the valleys and into them, especially on the approach to Steeple Bumpstead from the north and the south. Historically, development within Steeple Bumpstead was below 70m above sea level, as set out in section 6.15 of the Heritage Proof of Evidence from Adrian Gascoyne FSA MCIfA relating to the 2017 planning Inquiry referenced above, where he states "The historic core of Steeple Bumpstead is situated along the edges of the valley bottom of the Bumpstead Brook, generally below the 70 m contour, such that topography is a defining feature of the historic village." Characteristic views of the village are across the settlement from the valley sides. This is particularly true of views across the village from the north, from where there are attractive views of the village in its valley setting. Residents have expressed a strong preference to protect the defining topography of the village, with 74% agreeing or strongly agreeing that new development should be prevented on land more than 70 metres above sea level. Protecting these landscape features is in line with Policy LPP67 "Landscape Character and Features" in BDC's Local Plan.

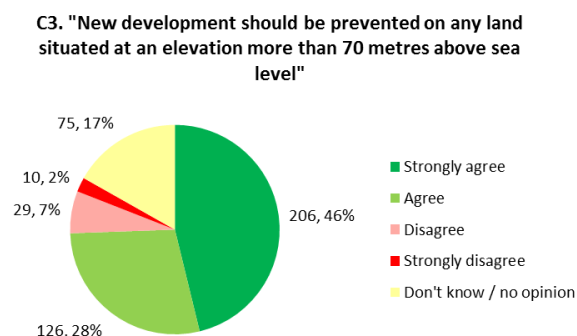


Figure 2

Village Development Boundary

5.2.3 In recent decades development within the village has been largely organic "infill" development within the village development boundary (colloquially referred to as the "village envelope"). Residents have expressed a very strong preference for this to continue, with 79% agreeing or strongly agreeing that new development should only be allowed in principle within the existing village envelope. This is in line with Policy LPP1 "Development Boundaries" in BDC's Local Plan, which states that: "Development outside development boundaries will be confined to uses appropriate to the countryside whilst also protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside."

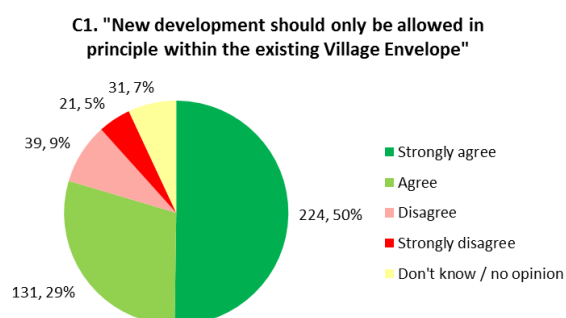
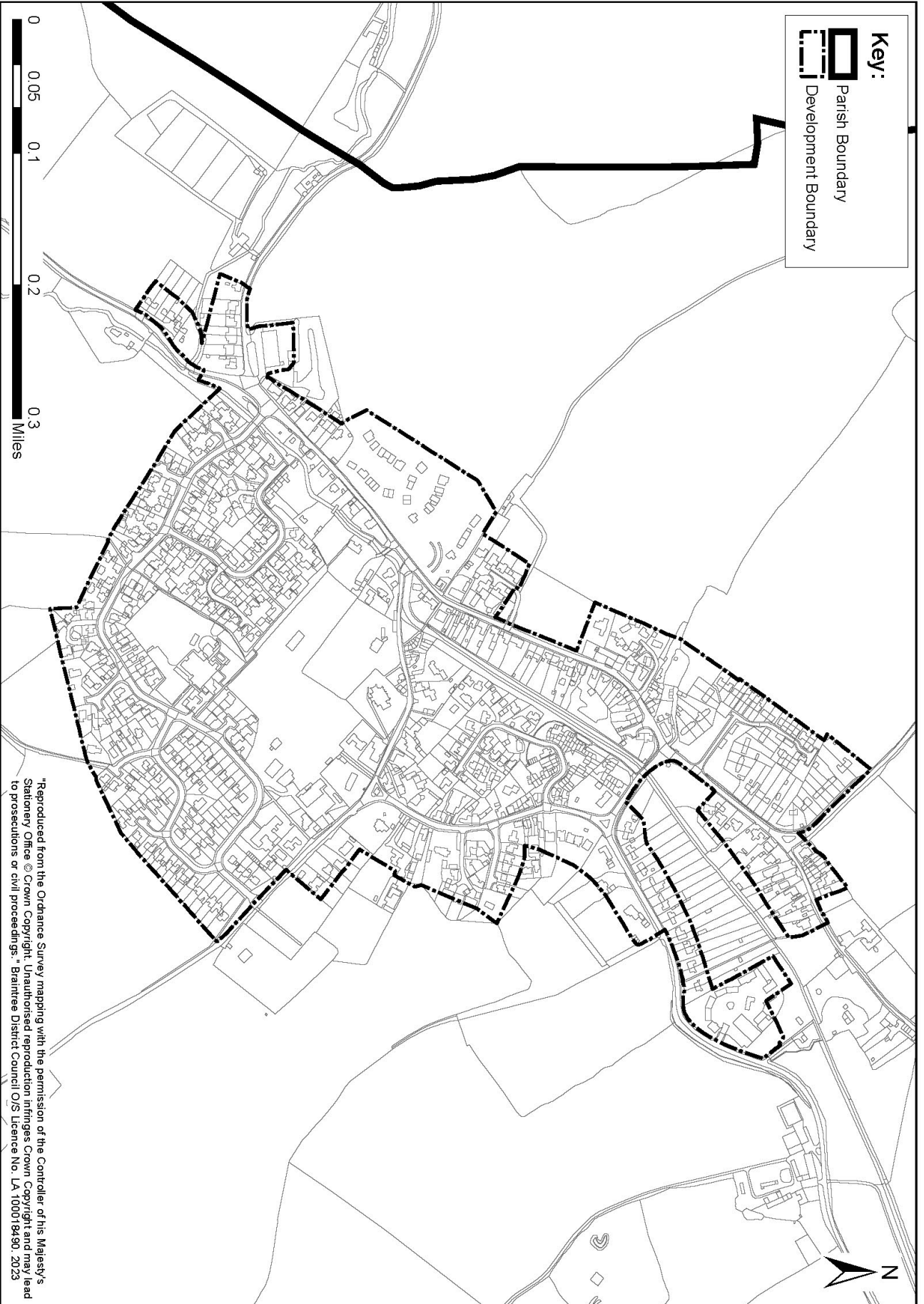


Figure 3

Map 2 Steeple Bumpstead Development Boundary



Stour Valley Project Area

5.2.4 Steeple Bumpstead lies within the Stour Valley Project Area (SVPA), which is the area covered by the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan 2021-26, the statutory Management Plan of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The SVPA is described in the Management Plan as "a cherished landscape by both residents and visitors. It has agriculture and wildlife at its core and everyone appreciates its scenic quality and beauty. The area is treasured and decisions impacting its landscape quality recognise its status as a valued landscape."

C2. "New development should be prevented if it would result in interrupting the views across and down into the valley"

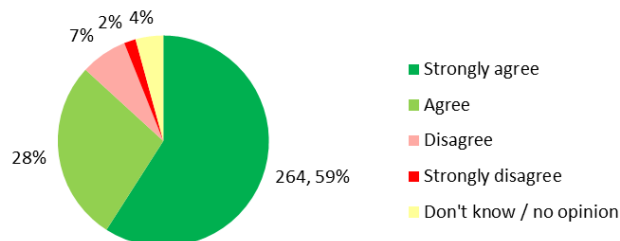


Figure 4

5.2.5 The Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Partnership also commissioned a detailed Valued Landscape Assessment of the SVPA from Alison Farmer Associates in March 2020, which sets out in great detail the qualities which make the SVPA a Valued Landscape. This assessment also describes the special qualities of the landscape in the Upper Stour area (which includes Steeple Bumpstead), and states that these qualities are particularly well expressed in the Bumpstead Brook and the setting to Steeple Bumpstead.

Footpaths

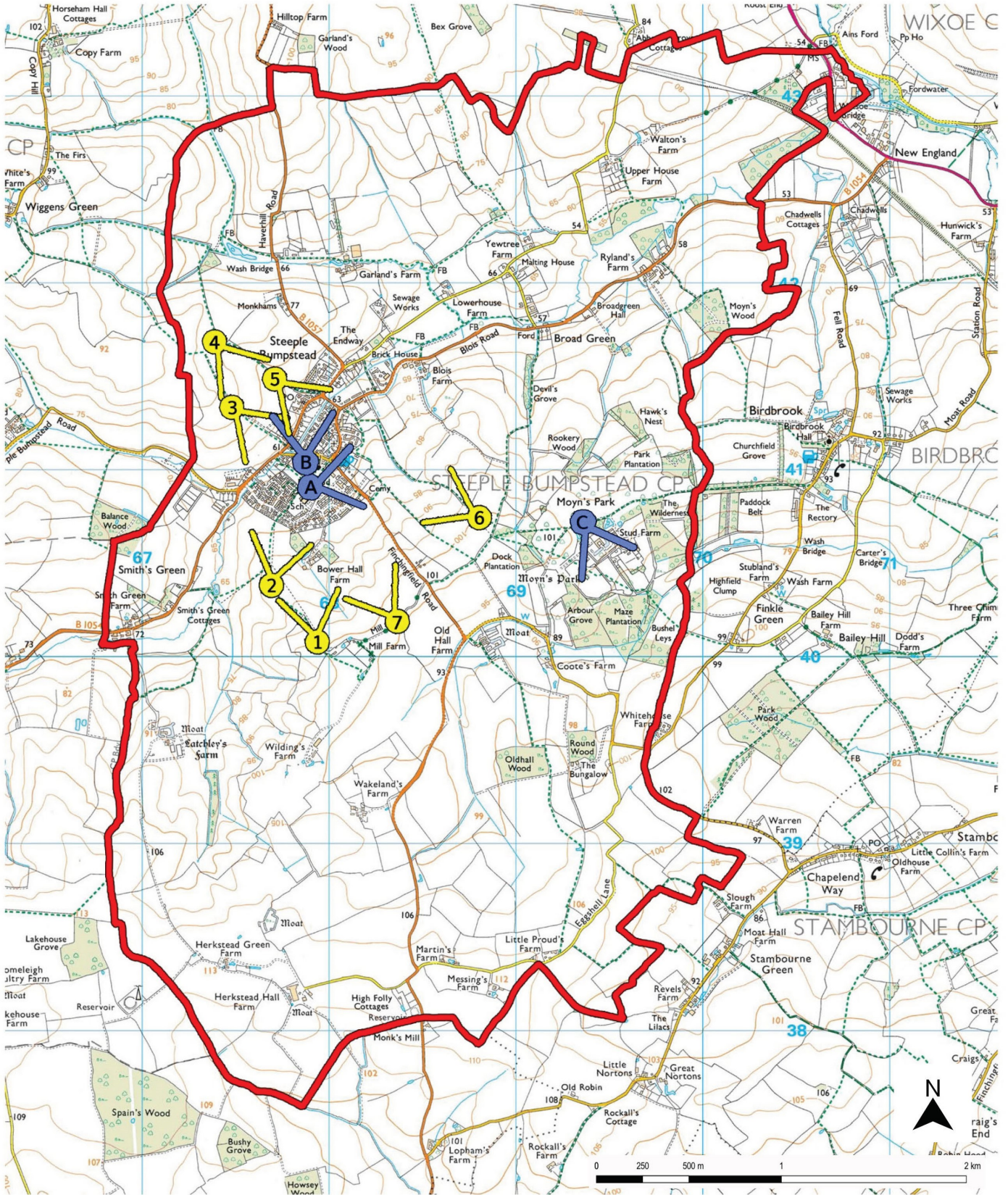
5.2.6 There are a number of well-used footpaths in and around Steeple Bumpstead, including several published walking routes around the area.

"Valued landscape"

5.2.7 In her Decision published on 6 September 2017 relating to the major planning Inquiry referred to above, which refused planning permission for that development, Inspector Gregory described the landscape as a "valued landscape", which was identified as one of the major reasons why she refused planning permission.

Landscape Character Assessment and Protected Views

5.2.8 Wynne-Williams Associates Ltd. was commissioned to produce a Landscape Character Assessment for Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council, attached as an Appendix to this Neighbourhood Plan, which has been adopted as an integral part of the Plan and includes within it a number of guidelines to ways in which any new developments must not negatively impact on the character of the landscape, and identifies key Protected Views to be protected as part of the Plan.



Illustrative protected view location



Additional photo location

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Map 3 Protected Views

Policy SB 1

Location of New Development

Development proposals within the Steeple Bumpstead Development Boundary as shown on Maps 1 and 2 will be supported provided that they:

- a. are located on brownfield development; and
- b. represent sustainable development; and
- c. meet relevant requirements set out in other policies of this Plan.

Development proposals outside of the Steeple Bumpstead Development Boundary will be supported where the proposals relate to a Rural Exception Scheme or uses appropriate to the countryside such as agricultural uses.

Policy SB 2

Protected Views

The village of Steeple Bumpstead is characterised by views across and down into the valley, and views to and from the Church of St Mary the Virgin. Specific Protected Views are identified within the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) which forms part of the Plan, and as shown on Map 3. Development proposals will be supported provided that they protect and / or enhance these views.

Development proposals which may have an adverse impact upon views across and down into the valley, and views to and from the Church of St Mary the Virgin, should be supported by a visual impact assessment which demonstrates the impact of the development upon views which are important to the character of the area.

5.3 The Built and Historic Environment

Objectives

- To protect and respect the rich history and heritage of the Parish
- To minimise the impact of any future development on the heritage assets of the village

Background and Intent

- 5.3.1** The village has a long and rich history. The name Bumpstead is thought to derive from the Anglo-Saxon for “the place where reeds grow”, reflecting its location at the bottom of a valley. The village is recorded in the Domesday Book.
- 5.3.2** Steeple Bumpstead originated as a nucleated, valley side settlement alongside the Bumpstead Brook, which is a tributary of the River Stour. The brook runs south-west to north-east through the centre of the village. The historic core of the settlement is focused on the valley floor and its edges, along North Street, which runs parallel to the Bumpstead Brook, Church Street and Chapel Street, and the site of the former ford over the watercourse.

Conservation Area

- 5.3.3** There is a designated Conservation Area within the historic core of the village, which contains a number of high quality buildings, including a total of 21 listed buildings, most dating from the 16th and 17th centuries. The oldest is the Church of St Mary the Virgin, which stands in the centre of the village within its roughly rectangular graveyard, adjacent to Church Street. The importance of the Church of St Mary the Virgin lies in its considerable historic and architectural importance as a well-preserved example of a medieval, perpendicular style church dating predominantly to the 11th, later 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. The church has historical and evidential significance for the development of medieval religious architecture, and for the understanding of the historic development of Steeple Bumpstead. The fabric of the building holds significance as archaeological evidence for its construction, including materials and design.

5.3.4

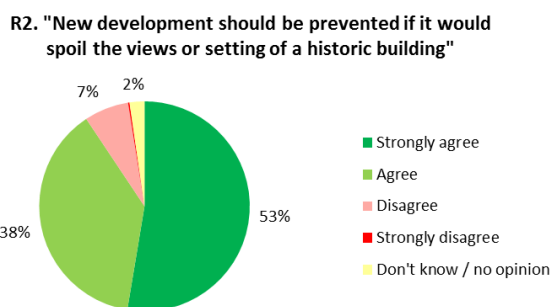


Figure 5

The special architectural and historic interest, and significance, of the Steeple Bumpstead Conservation Area derives from its long settlement history and development as a rural farming community, which is still apparent in its layout, surviving buildings and boundaries, and their relationship to each other and to their setting of open, farmed countryside. The historic core of the village is dense and compact, reflecting the linear development of the settlement along road frontages and the Bumpstead Brook.

- 5.3.5** The Conservation Area is rich in architectural detail and character, representing a good degree of social and architectural continuity. The settlement will contain important below ground archaeological evidence for its origins and development. The layout of the village appears to have originally developed from the church, with the oldest buildings, of timber frame construction situated on the east side of the brook, concentrated along Church Street, including Parsonage Farm and the Moot Hall, and Chapel Street, including the Ancient House, a 15th century Hall house. The Conservation Area is largely focused along historic route-ways and the Bumpstead Brook, which adds to its character. The unlisted Congregational Chapel along Chapel Street

is a prominent building. Later properties also developed along the valley floor on the west side. To the south-west of the village is the site of the former Bower Hall, demolished in the early 20th century, and its former parkland.

- 5.3.6** Protection of the Conservation Area is in accordance with Policy LPP53 "Conservation Areas" of BDC's Local Plan, which states: "The Council will encourage the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of designated Conservation Areas and their settings. These include the buildings, open spaces, landscape and historic features and views into, out from and within the constituent parts of designated areas."

Traditional Style and Detail of the Historic Environment

- 5.3.7** The traditional style and detail of the buildings, construction methods and materials, including weatherboarding, brick, tiled, slate and thatched roofs, are also relevant to the significance of the Conservation Area, as are the boundary treatments which provide texture and interest to different areas. Residents have expressed a strong preference for this to continue, with 79% agreeing or strongly agreeing that new developments should reflect the styles and appearance of the village's historic buildings. This is in accordance with Policy LPP47 "Built and Historic Environment" of BDC's Local Plan, which states: "The Council will promote and secure the highest possible standards of design and layout in all new development and the protection and enhancement of the historic environment..."

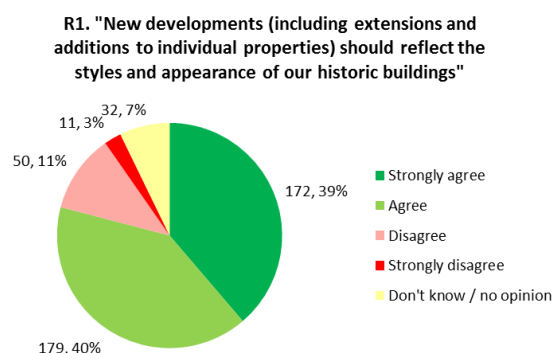


Figure 6

Design Guidance and Codes

- 5.3.8** Through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Programme led by Locality, AECOM Ltd. was commissioned to provide design support to Steeple Bumpstead Parish Council. This culminated in a set of Design Guidance and Codes, attached as an Appendix to this Neighbourhood Plan, which has been adopted as an integral part of the Plan to set out the expectations that applicants for planning permission in the parish will be expected to follow.

Tree Protection

- 5.3.9** There are also trees and open spaces that are of considerable importance, including the graveyard of the Church of St Mary the Virgin, gardens of the adjacent Broadgate House and farmland adjacent to Freezes Farm on North Street. Trees in the Conservation Area serve a positive and prominent landscape function, providing further variety of form, colour, scale and shape. Residents have expressed a very strong preference for this to continue, with 84% agreeing or strongly agreeing that new developments should be required to ensure that existing trees are left untouched. This is in accordance with Policy LPP65 "Tree Protection" of BDC's Local Plan.

R3. "New development should be required to ensure that existing trees are left untouched"

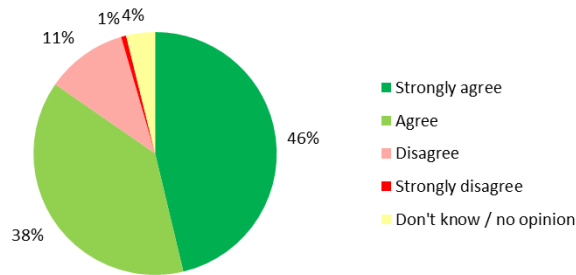


Figure 7

Policy SB 3

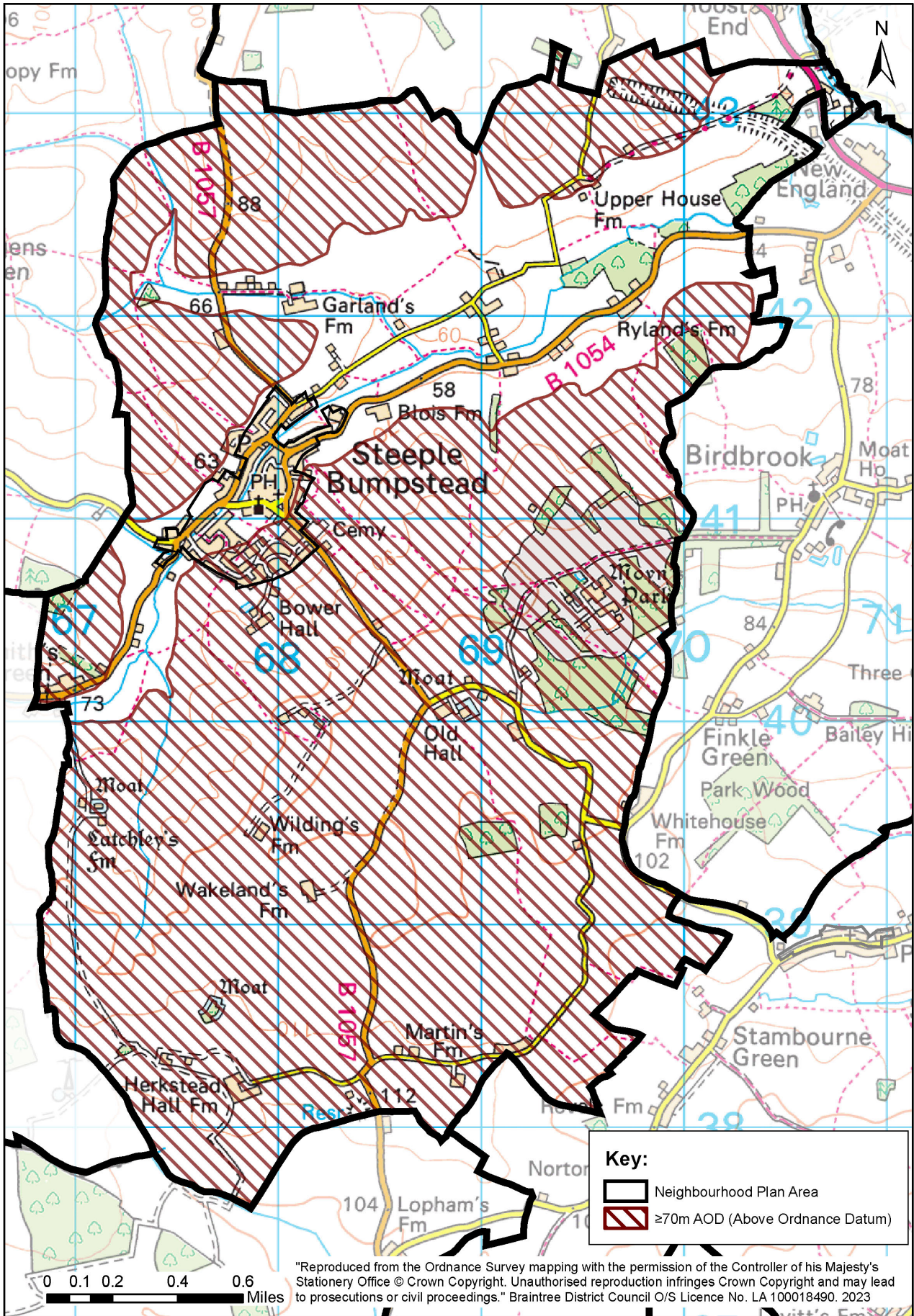
Design in Harmony with the Built and Historic Environment

All new development proposals in the area should demonstrate good quality design and respect the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area, and should be in conformity with the Steeple Bumpstead Parish Design Guidance and Codes as attached to this Neighbourhood Plan as an Appendix.

New development proposals will be supported provided that they fulfil all of the following requirements:

- a. using design that respects the scale and character of existing and surrounding buildings; and
- b. demonstrating that the design of the particular development has addressed and protected the positive features of the character of the local area; and
- c. using materials which are compatible with the materials of the host or surrounding buildings; and
- d. demonstrating that there is no or minimal negative impact on views or historic assets and their settings.

The village of Steeple Bumpstead is located in a valley, where the existing settlement pattern is predominately located below 70m AOD, as shown in Map 4. This pattern of development is important to the character and appearance of the area. New development proposals located above 70m AOD will be required to provide a Visual Impact Assessment which demonstrates the impact of the development on the character, appearance, and settlement pattern of the Parish. Proposals which have a detrimental impact on the character, appearance, and existing settlement pattern of the Parish will not be supported.



Map 4 Area 70m or more AOD (above Ordnance Datum)

Policy SB 4

Residential Development on Garden Land

Proposals for new dwellings on private residential gardens will be discouraged and will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- a. the reduced garden sizes of the existing dwellings in combination with the garden sizes of the new dwellings relate well to each other and to the surrounding neighbourhood; and
- b. the character of the surrounding neighbourhood (in terms of appearance and the massing of development and landscape value) is respected.

5.4 Housing

Objectives

- To ensure that likely future housing supply is matched with likely future housing needs
- To ensure an appropriate mix of housing for local needs, including affordable housing
- To define appropriate criteria for identifying potential sites for housing and types of homes required.

Background and Intent

- 5.4.1** The population of the village according to the 2011 Census was 1,627, with 659 households. The village had a higher proportion of couple households with no children (under age 65) – 26% of households in the Parish are couple households with no children – compared to the District and East of England proportions of 20% and 19% respectively. 79% of homes were owner-occupied, 9% social rented, 10% private rented and 2% living rent free. 64% of the housing stock in Steeple Bumpstead are 1-3 bed dwellings, and unusually 33% of the housing stock are bungalows, giving good housing supply for the older population. There is also managed accommodation for retired people at Bendyshe Court on Bower Hall Drive.
- 5.4.2** Factors such as location, design, character, density, affordability and housing mix are all important with regards to any future development.
- 5.4.3** Our Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure a supply of sufficient homes to meet local needs and contribute to the retention of a sustainable community. An appropriate housing mix must suit elderly residents as well as first time buyers and those needing affordable homes. Any new development should reflect the prevailing pattern and grain of development. These

measures will help to ensure that a high standard of development and design is achieved in Steeple Bumpstead and will discourage development that looks out of place and is poorly integrated with its surroundings.

- 5.4.4** The Plan policies are intended to ensure that a high quality of design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings is achieved in line with the core planning principles in the NPPF.

Identifying Housing Needs and Likely Future Housing Supply

- 5.4.5** As housing growth is addressed through the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans, it is clear that the development of housing related policies needs to be underpinned by robust and objectively assessed data in terms of local needs. As National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) makes clear, there is no exact science to establishing future housing needs, and no single approach will provide a definitive answer. The process will involve the gathering of information and facts, and making balanced judgements based on those facts.

- 5.4.6** The NPPG states that "Plan makers should avoid expending significant resources on primary research (information that is collected through surveys, focus groups or interviews etc. and analysed to produce a new set of findings) as this will in many cases be a disproportionate way of establishing an evidence base. They should instead look to rely predominantly on secondary data (e.g. Census, national surveys) to inform their assessment which are identified within the guidance".

- 5.4.7** In line with this guidance, the Steering Group has sought to undertake a balanced review of the available evidence. This is set out in more detail in the attached Report on Housing for the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan.

- 5.4.8** Briefly, however, the Steering Group sought to make a balanced judgement based on the following identified factors:

- 5.4.9** On the question of likely future housing needs over the Plan period:

- Braintree District Council has communicated a total of 48 homes required in terms of an indicative housing requirement figure for the Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Area over the 12-year period of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Based on the OAHN with an appropriate adjustment, housing needs within the Parish are likely to fall somewhere in the range of approximately 47 - 71 dwellings.
- Based on residents' expressed views on likely future housing needs, the largest cohort of residents expressed a view that the number of new homes needed would be between 10 - 20, and only 6% thought that more than 40 homes would be needed.

- 5.4.10** On the question of likely future housing supply over the Plan period:

- Based on the future housing supply already identified under the Local Plan and existing commitments of granted but unbuilt planning approvals, it is expected that the total supply of homes over the Plan period is likely to be around 49 homes.

5.4.11 Based on the above, the Steering Group concluded that there appeared to be strong evidence for a broad balance between likely future housing needs and likely future housing supply over the Plan period, and certainly within the likely margin of error in the assumptions.

5.4.12 On this basis, and in line with the proportionate approach recommended by the NPPG, the Steering Group concluded that:

- There is no apparent need to identify additional specific sites within the Parish for additional significant housing developments.
- There is no apparent need for the Steering Group to commission a detailed Housing Needs Assessment from a professional firm.

The Need for Policies and Allocations to meet the Housing Requirement

5.4.13 In light of the evidence set out in the Housing Report, the extent of Local Plan site allocations and planning permissions in the Parish, and BDC's current FYHLS position, there is no need for this Neighbourhood Plan to allocate further sites for residential development to meet the identified local housing requirement. This Plan positively supports the development of sites allocated in the Local Plan and with extant planning permission, ensuring development can take place in the area to meet the housing requirement for the area identified by BDC.

5.4.14 Through this approach, and in accordance with the conclusions of the recent High Court Judgement *Thurston Parish Council v Mid Suffolk District Council* from 18th February 2022 (see further details below), this Neighbourhood Plan has a sufficiently positive strategy towards supporting growth in the area to ensure that, where necessary in the future, the requirements of NPPF paragraph 14(b) (which requires a neighbourhood plan to 'contain policies and allocations to meet its housing requirement') have been sufficiently met without the need to allocate additional new development sites within the Plan.

Case study: High Court Judgement *Thurston Parish Council v Mid Suffolk District Council* (ref: EWHC 352), 18th February 2022

The court granted permission to Thurston Parish Council to apply for judicial review of outline planning permission by Mid Suffolk District Council for the development of up to 210 dwellings on land to the south of Beyton Road, Thurston, Suffolk. Under Ground 2 of the challenge, the Parish Council contended that the District Council Committee was given misleading advice by Council Officers relating to paragraph 14(b) of the NPPF and the application of the tilted balance in a case in which granting planning permission for a housing development would be in conflict with the neighbourhood plan. In the determination of the application, the District Council considered that paragraph 11(d) applied because the neighbourhood plan did not include site allocations as required in paragraph 14(b).

The court considered that it was not necessary for the Thurston NDP to include additional site allocations in order to meet the requirements of NPPF paragraph 14(b), as the neighbourhood plan policies and spatial strategies built on the existing pipeline of sites expected to be delivered in the

early years of the emerging draft Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan 2018-2036. Therefore, the court concluded that the Thurston NDP was sufficiently positive to fulfil the requirements of paragraph 14(b) of the NPPF.

While paragraph 97 of the PPG states that ‘policies and allocations within other development plan documents, for example strategic site allocations or windfall development set out in a local plan or spatial development strategy, will not meet criterion 14b of the National Planning Policy Framework’, the High Court decision concluded that the guidance in the PPG did not apply where it was clear that a Neighbourhood Plan is positively supporting Local Plan allocations which will sufficiently provide for the local housing requirement.

Size and Type of New Housing Developments

5.4.15 Residents' views about the maximum number of homes which should be included in any single new development were quite definitive, with 44% saying that the maximum should be 10 homes, and a further 38% saying the maximum should be 5 or less.

H2. What do you think should be the maximum number of homes in any single new development project?

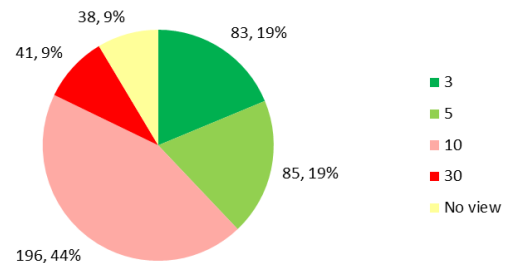


Figure 8

5.4.16 There were equally clear views about appropriate types of housing, with a strong preference for small homes (1 - 2 bedrooms), family homes (3 - 4 bedrooms), bungalows and affordable homes for local people (this is addressed further below). Conversely, there was very little expressed need for larger homes (5+ bedrooms) or flats.

H3. What types of housing you would you support being built in the village?

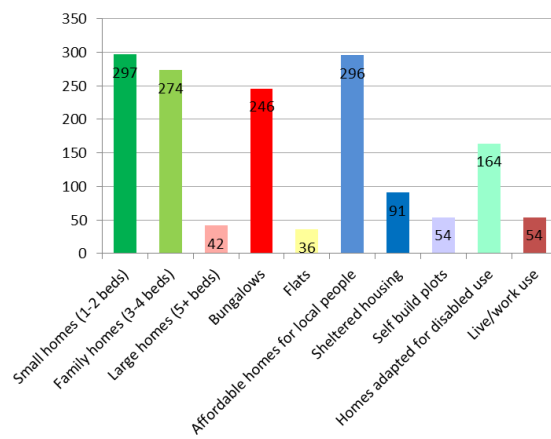


Figure 9

Greenfield vs Brownfield Developments

5.4.17

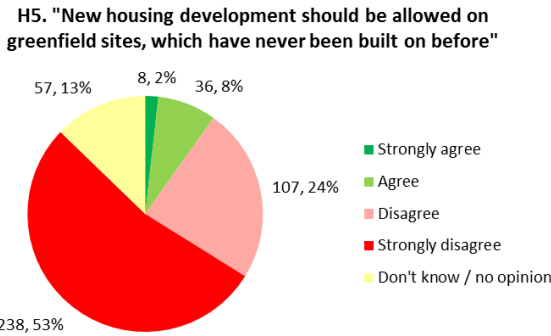


Figure 10

There was also a very strong preference expressed about the undesirability of greenfield development, with 77% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that such development should be allowed. Conversely, residents support brownfield development, with 81% agreeing or strongly agreeing that this should be permitted.

Gardens

5.4.18 Gardens are an important feature of the area and many existing properties are set in substantial grounds with front, side and rear spaces around the dwelling. Although garden land can provide space for new housing, inappropriate development can be harmful to the character of the area. The NPPF recognises this and states that policies resisting such development should be considered. Residents also strongly supported minimum garden sizes for new developments, with 78% agreeing or strongly agreeing that this should be required.

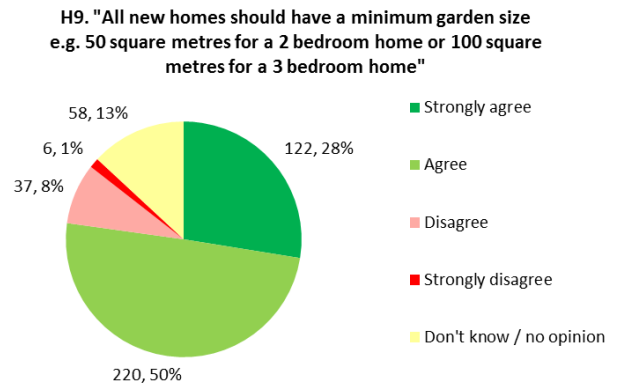


Figure 11

Affordable Housing

5.4.19 There are 62 existing affordable homes in Steeple Bumpstead. There are 54 Greenfields Community Housing homes in the village and 8 Hastoe Housing Association homes at Banstock Field.

5.4.20 New housing developments over 10 units can be required to include a percentage of affordable homes. This Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that all developments make a contribution towards meeting the need for affordable housing in the village.

5.4.21 The Survey indicated that where existing residents expect to have a future need to move to alternative accommodation within the village for themselves, almost all (88%) of this need is expected to be for owner occupied homes, with almost no expressed need from residents for rented or sheltered housing.

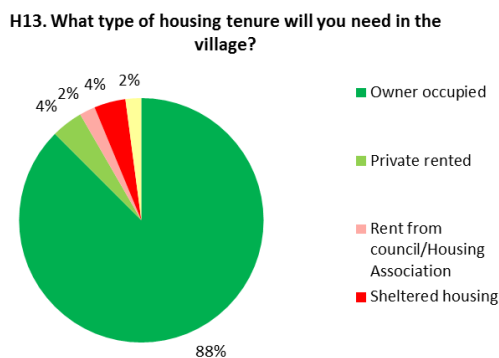


Figure 12

5.4.22 According to the Key Housing Needs Statistics - Steeple Bumpstead - Snapshot: March 2022 produced by Housing StatNav (a partnership project between Greenfields Community Housing and Braintree District Council), there were only 6 households with a current address in the village as at March 2022 registered on Braintree District Council's system (Gateway to HomeChoice) waiting for housing association homes.

5.4.23 Taken together, this evidence appears to indicate that there is not a significant unmet need for affordable homes for rental in the village.

5.4.24 Conversely, there was a very strong desire expressed by residents that where new affordable housing is developed, this should be offered at first occupation only to people with a local connection i.e. those living in or with family in Steeple Bumpstead, with 84% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this.

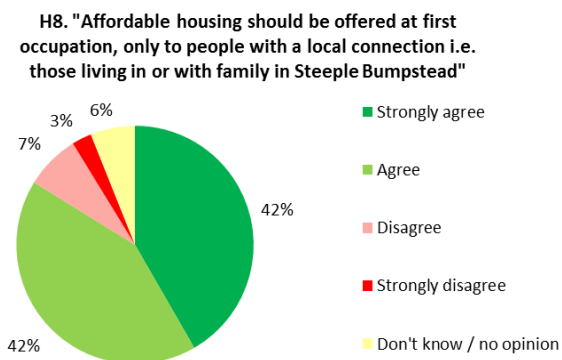


Figure 13

5.4.25 Encouraging the development of new affordable housing is in accordance with Policy LPP32 "Affordable Housing in Rural Areas" of BDC's Local Plan.

Planning Applications

5.4.26 Any development proposals for sites allocated in this Plan will need to obtain planning permission from BDC, which will consider the application against its own policies and national policies together with the policies of this Plan.

Policy SB 5

Affordable Housing

New development proposals should:

- Provide affordable housing in accordance with the requirements set out within the adopted Braintree District Local Plan; and
- Outline current local needs for affordable housing, and demonstrate how the proposed development will assist in meeting local needs; and
- Ensure that affordable housing provision is made available in the first instance to people with a local connection to the Parish.

Outside of the defined Steeple Bumpstead village Development Boundary, proposals for a Rural Exception Site will be supported, subject to 100% allocation to affordable housing within the Rural Exception Site as well as the requirements of other policies within this Plan, provided that the affordable housing will be made available in the first instance to people with a local connection to the Parish in perpetuity.

5.5 Local Economy

Objectives

- To support local business and retain local employment
- To encourage new business and employment opportunities in the Parish

Background and Intent

5.5.1 There are very few employment opportunities in Steeple Bumpstead itself. The nearest significant employment centres outside the village are at Haverhill, Saffron Walden and Cambridge, and a number of residents commute to London. The lack of local employment is demonstrated by the fact that only 4.2% of work trips from Steeple Bumpstead are undertaken on foot. Residents have expressed a very strong preference for

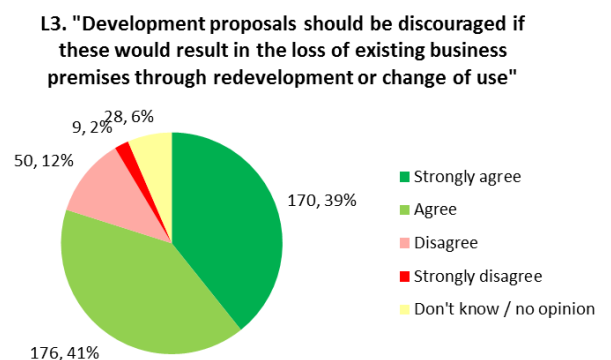


Figure 14

the limited employment opportunities in the village to be protected and encouraged, with 80% agreeing or strongly agreeing that new developments should not result in the loss of existing business premises.

Current Employment Profile

5.5.2 According to the 2011 Census, the economic activity of the parish of Steeple Bumpstead is very similar to the Braintree District as a whole. Just over two thirds of people are employed (72%), 3% of residents are unemployed and actively seeking employment and 25% are 'economically inactive' - retired, homemakers, carers etc.

Local Employment and Business Parks

5.5.3

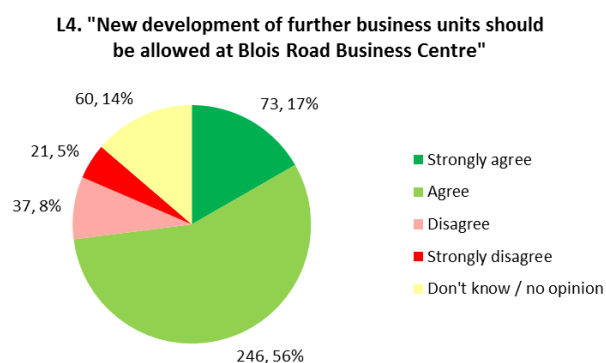


Figure 15

Businesses that provide employment include the two village pubs, the village store and Post Office, the Primary School, the village surgery, and a number of small businesses sited at the local business centre in Blois Road. There is a nursery and day centre next to the business centre. Residents have expressed a strong preference for encouraging additional employment opportunities in the village, with 73% agreeing or strongly agreeing that development of further business units should be permitted at the Blois Meadow Business Centre. Encouraging the provision of employment opportunities within business parks is in accordance with Policy LPP6 "Business Parks" of BDC's Local Plan, which specifically cites Blois Meadow Business Centre.

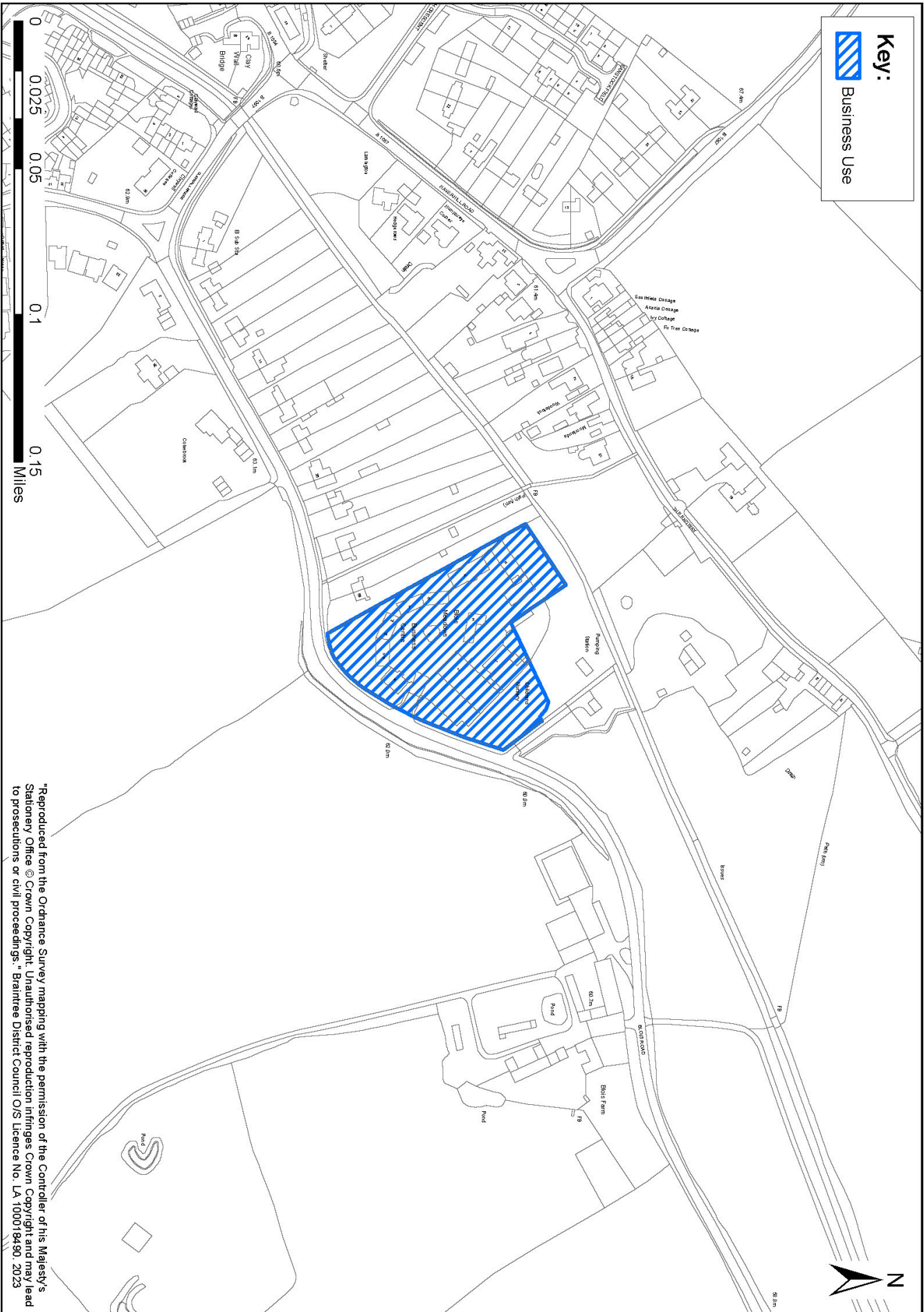
Farm Businesses

5.5.4 As a rural parish, there are a number of active farming businesses in and around the parish of Steeple Bumpstead, mostly family farming businesses. These types of business are recognised to contribute significantly to rural economies, either by directly providing income to owners and employees, or by supporting ancillary trades which rely on agriculture.

5.5.5 Steeple Bumpstead is steeped in agricultural history, and whilst many people have left the land over the last century for other employment opportunities, a sense of community which promotes healthy social relationships, as well as a mutually supportive network for business management still exists within Steeple Bumpstead.

5.5.6 Steeple Bumpstead is home to one of the oldest and largest agricultural discussion societies in the UK, where meetings take place monthly in the lecture hall to the rear of the Chapel and supports these positive relationships.

Map 5 Business park allocations



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- 5.5.7** As well as a means of income, farm business also provide housing for owners and employees. Living on the farm is considered essential for the proper running of a farm business. In many instances, new accommodation may be required to house those retiring from work, new entrants into the business or employees.
- 5.5.8** Economic sustainability of farm businesses is important to protect incomes of those who still depending on farming for an income, and safeguard the rural economy. The development of diversification schemes to provide alternative sources of revenue are becoming increasingly important to support the core business of farming. Examples of schemes commonly used to diversify farm business income include farm shops/cafes, holiday lettings, education facilities and green energy production.
- 5.5.9** Diversification of farming systems may be necessary in promoting sustainability, and where necessary, new farm buildings and infrastructure may be required to support new enterprises.
- 5.5.10** Residents have expressed a preference for allowing new development by converting existing farm buildings, but support for new buildings is likely to be much lower given the strong opposition expressed to developments outside the Village Development Boundary and to greenfield developments (see Housing section above).

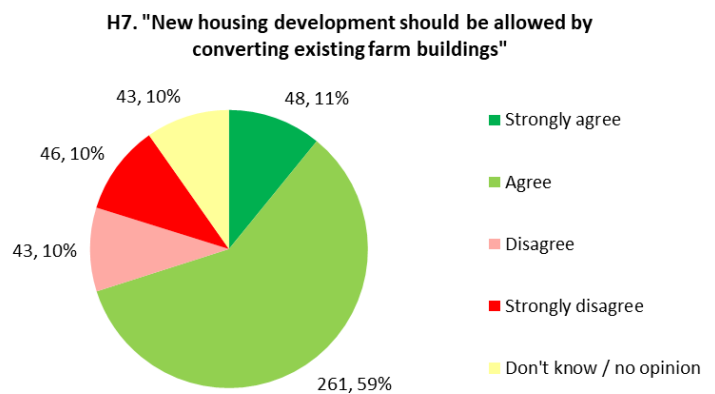


Figure 16

Policy SB 6

Protecting Existing Business Uses

Proposals which will result in the loss of an existing business use (including Use Classes B2, B8, and E) will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the site has been marketed effectively for a minimum of twelve months at a rate which is comparable to local market value for its existing use, or as redevelopment opportunity for other similar uses, and it can be demonstrated that the continuous existing use of the site is no longer viable, taking into account the site's existing and potential long-term market demand in its current use. Business park allocations within the Parish are shown in Map 5.

Policy SB 7

Farm Businesses

Outside development boundaries, proposals which support the diversification of farm businesses through small-scale commercial development will be supported provided that the development relates to the conversion and re-use of existing buildings that are of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without complete re-building.

Proposals for the provision of rural workers' accommodation will be supported provided that the need is demonstrated in order to support the future management of the farm business. Accommodation should be provided through the conversion and re-use of existing buildings where possible.

5.6 Community Facilities

Objectives

- To maintain and protect the community facilities and services available to residents
- To ensure that the open public spaces within the village are protected and properly maintained

Background and Intent

5.6.1

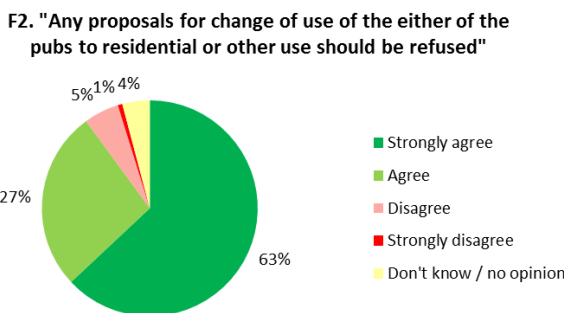


Figure 17

Steeple Bumpstead has a number of community facilities and services used and much valued by residents, including a local village store, a Post Office, a petrol station, an antiques shop, and a part-time library in the Moot Hall. There are two pubs, The Fox and Hounds and The Red Lion, which are of importance to the local community. There are two churches, the Church of England parish church of St. Mary's and the Congregational Church, each offering various activities for all ages.

5.6.2 Steeple Bumpstead has a primary school, Steeple Bumpstead Primary School. Residents have expressed a very strong preference for protecting the provision of community facilities, with 90% agreeing or strongly agreeing that change of use of the village pubs should be refused, 96% agreeing or strongly agreeing that change of use of the village surgery should be refused, and 95% agreeing or strongly agreeing that change of use of the village school should be refused.

F3. "Any proposals for redevelopment or change of use of the Surgery to residential or other non-healthcare use should be refused, unless this is an essential part of raising funds for a new build surgery on a larger site within the village"

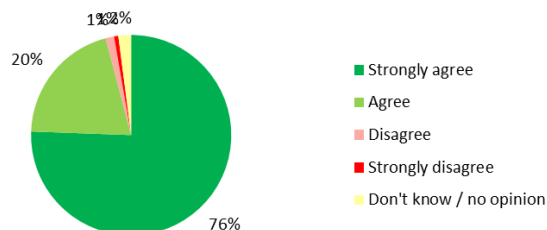
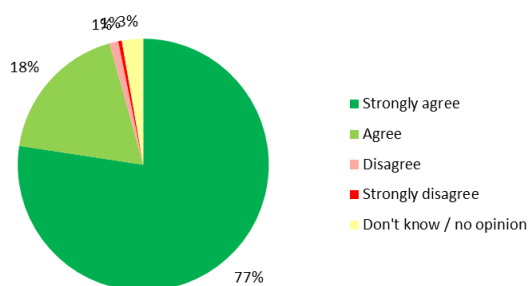


Figure 18

5.6.3 F4. "Any proposals for redevelopment or change of use of the School or any of its grounds to residential or other non-educational use should be refused"



This is in accordance with Policy LPP60 "Educational Establishments" of BDC's Local Plan, which states: "The change of use or re-development of educational establishments and their grounds will not be permitted." and Policy LPP61 "Local Community Services and Facilities" of BDC's Local Plan, which states: "The Council will seek the retention of all existing community facilities and services where they meet an identified local need."

Figure 19

Clubs and Activities

5.6.4 There is a large Village Hall located centrally which hosts a number of club activities, including badminton, line dancing, a country music club, bingo and a regular Farmers' Market as well as an active amateur dramatic society, the Steeple Bumpstead Players, with a junior section, the Junipers. There is an active bowls club situated at a dedicated clubhouse on Water Lane. Steeple Bumpstead has a Scout Group, 1st Steeple Bumpstead Scouts, which consists of a Beaver Colony, a Cub Pack and a Scout Troop. There is an active Brownies group and a Girl Guides group. There is also a community choir which practices and performs in the village church, a golf society, a running group, and a wildlife and environmental group. There is also a farmers' discussion group, believed to be the oldest in the country.

Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

5.6.5 There are two open public spaces within the village, Humphrey's Meadow adjacent to Claywall Bridge and the much larger Camping Close in the centre of the village, which is used for a wide variety of communal activities including football and cricket clubs in season, regular car boot sales, and occasional Jubilee and other public celebrations etc. There are also a number of allotments within the village, situated behind the houses on North Street opposite Claywall Bridge. There are two children's' play areas, on the Camping Close and at North Crescent, with dedicated play equipment. Residents have expressed a very strong preference for protecting the village's open spaces, with 95% agreeing or strongly agreeing that no developments on these areas should be permitted. This is in accordance with Policy LPP50 "Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation" of BDC's Local Plan, which states: " Open space, sports and recreational land and buildings that are identified as needed in the Council's Open Space Study and/or are of particular value to a local community, will be protected by the Council. "

F1. "New developments that would result in the loss of the whole or part of Humphrey's Meadow or the Camping Close should be prevented"

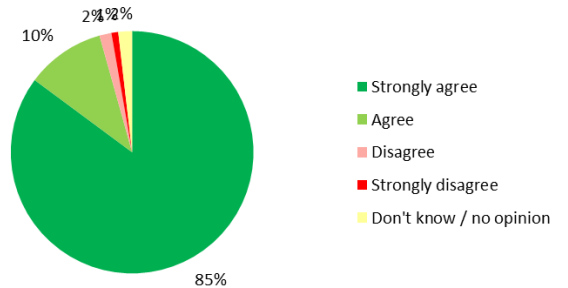
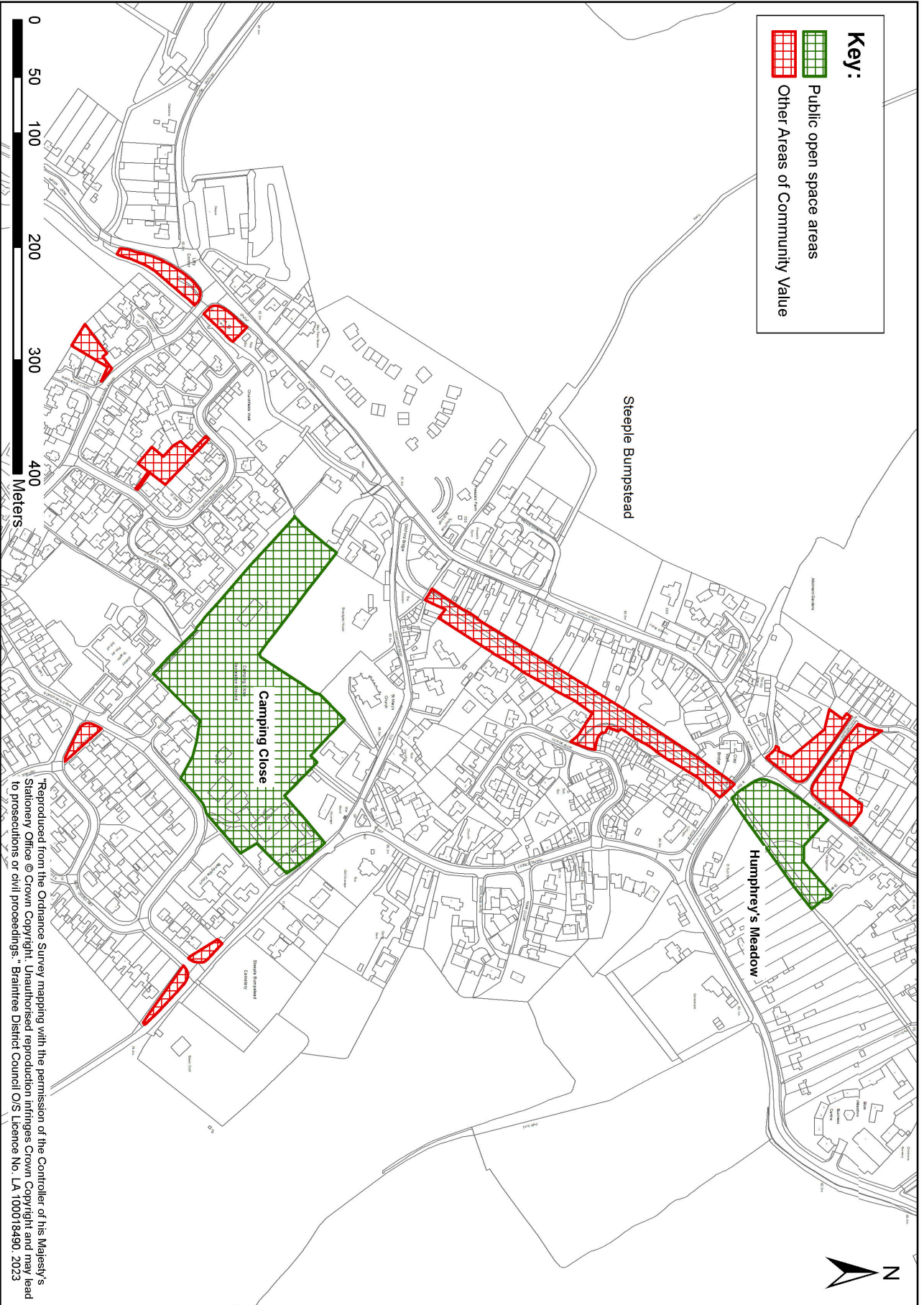


Figure 20

Map 6 Areas of Community Value



Policy SB 8

Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

Development at the public open space areas, Humphrey's Meadow and Camping Close and Other Areas of Community Value (as shown on Map 6) will be permitted where the proposals are ancillary to the existing uses on the site, and support and enhance the enjoyment of these areas.

Proposals for development that would result in the loss of the whole or part of the public open space areas, including Humphrey's Meadow and Camping Close and Other Areas of Community Value (as shown on Map 6) will not generally be permitted, other than in exceptional circumstances for essential utility infrastructure where no other feasible alternative site is available, or where an equivalent or enhanced replacement facility is provided in a convenient and accessible location.

Policy SB 9

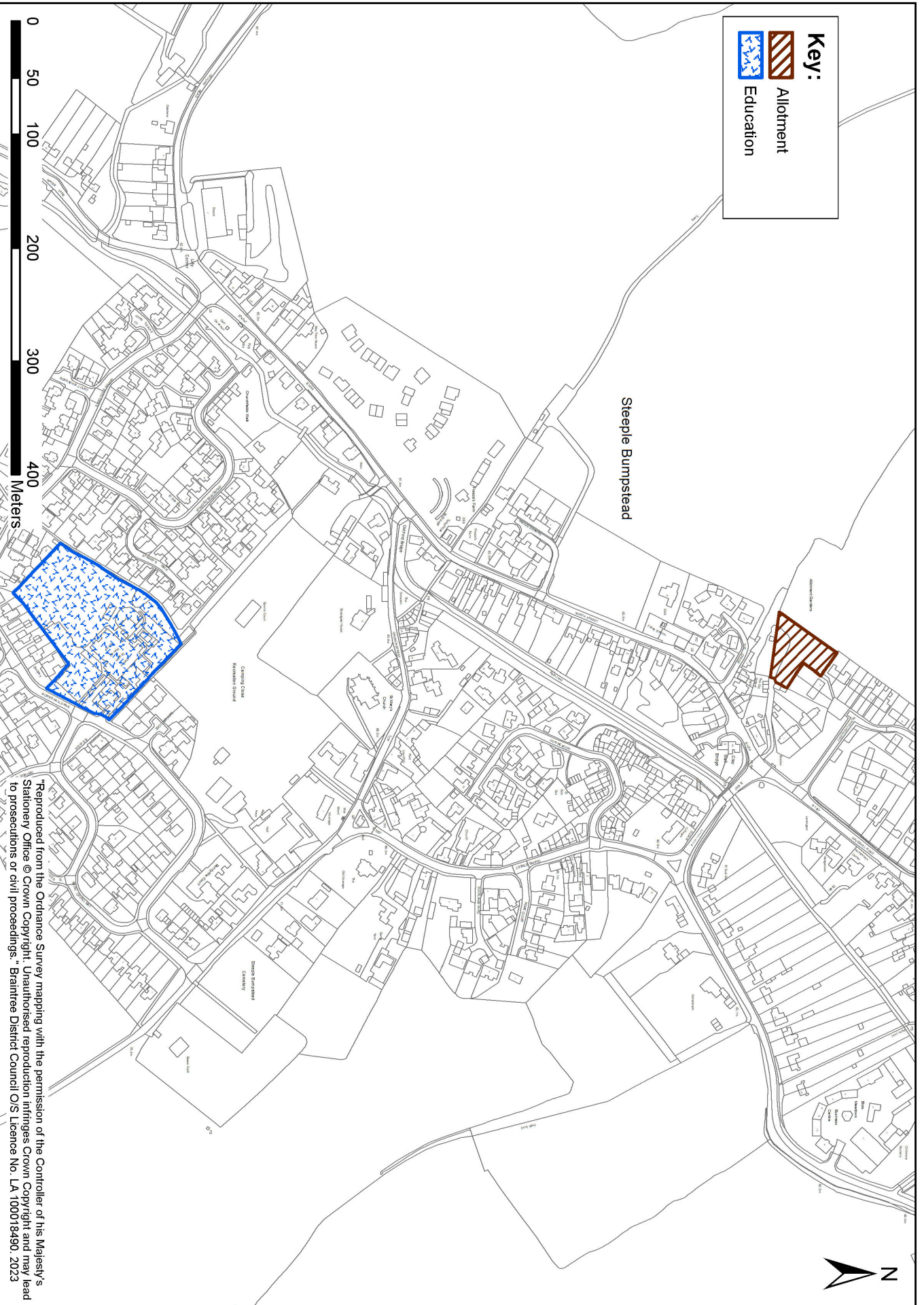
Protecting Community Uses

Proposals which will result in the loss of an existing community uses (including Use Classes E and F) will be supported provided that it can be demonstrated that the site has been marketed effectively for a minimum of twelve months at a rate which is comparable to local market value for its existing use, or as redevelopment opportunity for other similar uses, and it can be demonstrated that the continuous existing use of the site is no longer viable, taking into account the site's existing and potential long-term market demand in its current use.

Marketing evidence is not required in relation to educational facilities (Use Class F). Proposals resulting in the loss of an educational facility will not be supported unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the existing use of the educational facility is redundant, a satisfactory alternative facility is to be provided or local education needs will be appropriately provided for in the area to the satisfaction of Essex County Council, lead authority for education.

Areas of community use are shown in Map 7.

Map 7 Areas of community use



5.7 Highways and Transport

Objectives

- To improve safety for all highway users in, through and around the village, including pedestrians and cyclists.
- To promote and support public transport, and travel by foot and cycle.

Background and Intent

5.7.1 Private car ownership and use is high in Steeple Bumpstead. The Steeple Bumpstead area has a car driver mode share of 84.7%, which is significantly higher than the average for the Braintree District as a whole (69.9%), as shown in the following table using 2011 Census data:

| Area | Mode of travel to work | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------|-------|------|-------|------|----------|
| | car driver | walk | cycle | bus | train | m/c | car pass |
| Steeple Bumpstead | 84.7% | 4.2% | 0.4% | 1.2% | 4.3% | 0.9% | 4.3% |
| Average for Braintree District | 69.9% | 10.9% | 1.6% | 2.4% | 9.2% | 0.7% | 5.3% |

5.7.2 The primary reason for this is the very poor level of availability of public transport, or other forms of transport such as cycling, from the village to local destinations offering employment, retail and other facilities.

5.7.3 Steeple Bumpstead contains a number of local facilities. However, all higher order facilities, including bulk food retail, comparison shopping, cinemas, personal business, higher order leisure and sports facilities, hospitals, secondary education and other further and higher education require travel to surrounding urban areas including Haverhill, Saffron Walden, Bury St Edmunds and Cambridge. Haverhill offers a range of higher order facilities including food retail and comparison shopping and leisure and recreation facilities. Secondary schools are located in Hedingham (local catchment), Newport and Saffron Walden. Hospitals and higher order education are available in Cambridge and Bury St Edmunds. The nearest railway station is at Audley End (21km away).

5.7.4 The provision of public transport to all of these is extremely limited, as set out below.

Buses

5.7.5 Although buses run between Steeple Bumpstead and the railway station, the timing of the buses makes it impossible to use bus and train for regular commuting trips. There is a limited bus service between Steeple Bumpstead and Haverhill, Saffron Walden and Newport. No direct bus services run between Steeple Bumpstead and Bury St Edmunds or Cambridge. In terms of full-time employment, buses provide an opportunity to access work destinations (Saffron Walden) for only 3.1% of residents in Steeple Bumpstead and even then, there is only one bus available to reach Saffron Walden before 09:00 (07:37). There is also only one bus available to reach Haverhill before 09:00 (07:50). School bus services run between Steeple Bumpstead and the secondary schools in Hedingham, Saffron Walden, Newport and Clare. These cater for pupils arriving and leaving at the main school start and finish times.

Trains

5.7.6 The nearest train station is at Audley End. This station is on the London Liverpool Street to Cambridge line. Services generally run at a frequency of 4 per hour to Cambridge and up to 4 per hour to London. Audley End railway station lies 21km from Steeple Bumpstead. The route passes through Saffron Walden which is a sensitive area suffering severe congestion in the peak hours. It is possible to access the station by bus. The bus service between Steeple Bumpstead and Audley End railway station would not cater for full time employees working in Cambridge or in any areas on the line towards London. Overall, there is very limited potential for residents to access train travel by public transport.

Cycling

5.7.7 Cycling is generally considered a feasible mode of travel for journeys under 5km. This, however, does not take into account other factors that affect the likelihood of a person choosing to cycle. Although some of Haverhill lies within 5km of the site, the route is hilly and unsuitable for all but the most determined and experienced of cyclists. The route from Steeple Bumpstead to Haverhill involves a total ascent of 50m. The route from Haverhill to the village involves a total ascent of 65m. There are three sharp bends on the B1057 between Steeple Bumpstead and Haverhill where forward visibility is severely restricted. The width of the B1057 is between 5.7m and 6.0m. This width allows all vehicles to pass each other but is insufficient to allow vehicles to overtake bicycles without encroaching into the path of oncoming vehicles. Apart from the tight bends, the road has an alignment that allows vehicles to travel at relatively high speeds. For vehicles to safely pass cyclists at the blind bends they need to slow significantly and pass only when the bend has been passed and a safe assessment of oncoming traffic made. This environment of relatively high traffic speeds and tight bends is both threatening for cyclists and potentially hazardous for both cyclists and vehicle users.

"Provision is extremely limited"

5.7.8 In her Decision published on 6 September 2017 relating to the major planning Inquiry referred to above, which refused planning permission for that development, Inspector Gregory stated that "I acknowledge that frequency of rural public transport will not be the same as in urban areas, but the level of provision is so small as to be extremely limited. All but the most organised and determined persons would be dissuaded from using it" and "Given the limited accessibility

to other forms of transport to the private motor car, future residents would be dependent on the private motor car for access to most shops, services and facilities elsewhere". This was identified as another of the major reasons why the appeal was dismissed.

Highways Issues within the Village

5.7.9

T4. "New housing developments should provide adequate and suitable off-street parking, for a minimum of two parking spaces for units with 1 - 3 bedrooms, and a minimum of three parking spaces for units with 4 or more bedrooms"

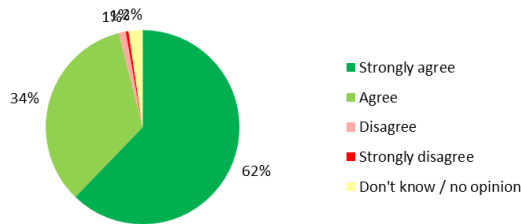


Figure 21

Like many rural villages, Steeple Bumpstead has narrow roads and lanes. Inappropriate parking is often a problem in the village e.g. across private driveways, on pavements, at junctions and in narrow roads, and overall there is a major concern that there is insufficient off-street parking within the village. Residents have expressed a very strong preference for more parking facilities, with 96% agreeing or strongly agreeing that new housing developments should include adequate off-street parking. Ensuring adequate parking provision is in accordance with Policy LPP43 "Parking Provision" of BDC's Local Plan, which states: "Development will be required to provide vehicular and cycle parking..."

5.7.10 There is a perception that vehicles drive through the village too quickly, and pedestrians feel vulnerable in several places where they have to walk in the road. There are concerns about heavy goods vehicles driving through the village roads.

5.7.11 The problematic combination of difficult junctions, narrow roads, and traffic pressure on existing road infrastructure should be taken into account when considering any future development.

5.7.12 Areas of concern include the three-way junction between Claywall Bridge, Chapel Street and Blois Road, where the existing triangular junction suffers poor visibility for cars turning right onto Blois Road from Chapel Street and which should ideally be replaced with a mini-roundabout. 54% of residents agreed or strongly agreed that this should be implemented. Another area of concern is the three-way junction between North Street, The Endway and Haverhill Road, where the existing triangular junction does not reflect the natural flow of traffic and should ideally be replaced with the marked carriageway simply joining North Street and Haverhill Road, with the junction with The Endway being marked as a side junction. 59% of residents agreed or strongly agreed that this should be implemented.

T6. "The three-way junction between Claywall Bridge, Chapel Street and Blois Road should be replaced with a mini-roundabout"

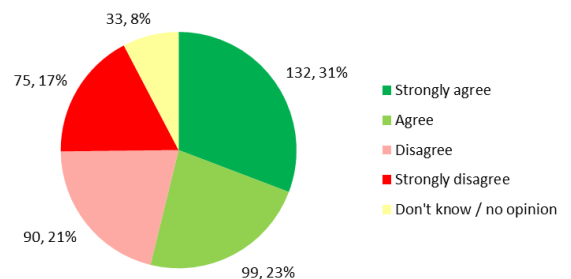


Figure 22

T7. "The three-way junction between North Street, The Endway and Haverhill Road should be replaced with the marked carriageway simply joining North Street and Haverhill Road, with the junction with The Endway being marked as a side junction"

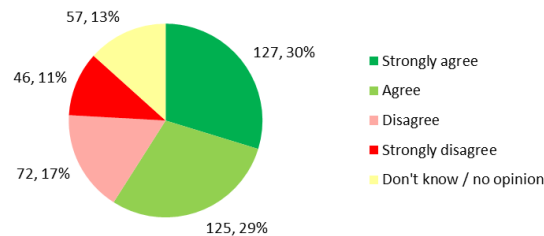


Figure 23

Policy SB 10

Impact of New Development on Traffic

Proposals for new development will be required to:

- Provide safe and convenient access for vehicles and pedestrians with visibility splays consistent with current standards; and
- Submit a Transport Assessment or Statement and Travel Plan as appropriate.

Policy SB 11

Parking Provision

Development proposals that generate an increased need for parking must provide adequate and suitable off-street parking in order to minimise obstruction of the local road network in the interests of the safety of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists. Parking spaces can take the form of spaces or garage / car port facilities, but must be permanently available to the resident for parking use.

Any new residential parking to be provided, whether in new development or through additional provision associated with alterations or extensions to existing development, is required to have regard to Essex Parking Standards (or any subsequent update to this) and the design principles established in the Essex Design Guide. Departures from the Essex Parking Standards (EPS) will require the submission of supporting evidence.

Proposals that would reduce the existing level of off-street parking provision will be resisted unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the amount of overall provision is adequate for the existing and future use of the site.

6 Monitoring and Review

- 6.0.1** The Neighbourhood Plan covers the period 2022 to 2033. Monitoring will show whether the Plan's objectives and policies are working and whether sustainable development is being achieved.
- 6.0.2** The Parish Council will use the Plan when making its recommendations to BDC on planning applications and will monitor both the progress of sites coming forward for development and the provision of infrastructure.
- 6.0.3** The Plan is based on the community's current needs and aspirations and these may change over the Plan period. If the Plan's objectives are not being met as expected or there are new challenges and concerns that need to be considered, the Parish Council will decide whether action, including a review of the Plan, is necessary.

7 Appendices - Supporting Documents

7.0.1 This section includes the following separate documents, which are formally incorporated as part of the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Report on Housing for Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Design Guidance and Codes compiled by AECOM Limited and adopted as part of the Plan
- Landscape Character Assessment (plus two Appendices) compiled by Wynne-Williams Associates Limited and adopted as part of the Plan

Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement compiled by DAC Planning Limited and adopted as part of the Plan

Steeple Bumpstead Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement compiled by DAC Planning Limited and adopted as part of the Plan

7.0.2 Numerous additional maps are contained within the Landscape Character Assessment, the most important of which are as follows)

- p4 / Figure 1 - Essex Landscape Character Assessment Map
- p7 / Figure 2 - Braintree District Landscape Character Assessment Map
- p11 / Figure 3 - Stour Valley Project Area Extract
- p15 / Figure 6 - Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Map
- p18 / Figure 8 - Access in the Parish (detailing footpaths within the parish)
- p23 / Figure 10 - Steeple Bumpstead Parish Landscape Character Area Map

7.0.3 This section also includes the following separate documents, which relate to the Residents' Survey described in the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Steeple Bumpstead Residents' Survey September 2019
- Results of Steeple Bumpstead Residents' Survey September 2019 (Excel file)

8 Background Information

8.0.1 This section lists a number of documents which contain background information as part of the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Note: as the documents listed in this section are all in the public domain and freely available over the internet, they are not specifically attached to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Braintree District Council Planning Documents

- Braintree District Local Plan 2033 in two sections:
 - Section 1 is a strategic plan for North Essex, adopted on 22nd February 2021. It is shared with Colchester and Tendring Councils and covers all three authorities.
 - Section 2 contains policies, maps and sites for development, housing, employment, regeneration etc within Braintree District Council, adopted on 25th July 2022.
- Objectively Assessed Housing Need Study - November 2016 update conducted by Peter Brett Associates

National Planning Documents

- National Planning Practice Guidance
- National Planning Policy Framework 2021

General background information

- Key Housing Needs Statistics - Steeple Bumpstead from www.braintree.gov.uk/housingstatnav

Documents from 2017 Inquiry

8.0.2 This section includes the following documents produced for the extensive planning Inquiry held in July 2017 concerning a previously proposed major housing development just outside the village boundary, which was adjudicated by Julia Gregory BSc (Hons), BTP, MRTPI, MCMI, an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, by a variety of fully qualified experts in a range of relevant areas:

- Appeal Decision by Julia Gregory BSc (Hons), BTP, MRTPI, MCMI
- Proof of Evidence - Landscape and Visual Issues prepared by Michelle Bolger CMLI, Dip.LA, BA, PGCE, BA

- Heritage Proof of Evidence prepared by Adrian Gascoyne FSA MCIfA
- Proof of Evidence on Transport Sustainability Matters prepared by Bruce Bamber BSc MA MSc CMILT MCIHT

AONB documents

- Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Management Plan 2021-26
- Valued Landscape Assessment of the Stour Valley Project Area commissioned by the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Partnership from Alison Farmer Associates in March 2020

