



Renhold
Neighbourhood Plan



DRAFT RENHOLD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (SUMMARY)



REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION

18th November 2024 to 13th January 2025

INTRODUCTION

The Renhold Neighbourhood Plan is being developed on behalf of the community by a working group of 12 local residents. Once it has been approved by a majority of local residents and 'made' by Bedford Borough Council (BBC), it will become a legal planning policy document and used by the Local Authority alongside other Local Plan documents to help to determine planning applications.

Over the past four years, we have consulted the community at various stages of the process to ensure that the Plan reflects the widest possible selection of needs and aspirations across the Parish.

The responses to these consultations have been applied to establish a vision for Renhold for the next 20 years and to identify what land use policies we need to define how our neighbourhood will shape and evolve in the future.

This leaflet summarises the Draft Neighbourhood Plan to:

- Set out the emerging vision, objectives and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Seek the support of the local community for the proposals.

Your comments will be considered, and any amendments will be reflected in the Plan, as part of this 'Regulation 14' consultation. It will then be submitted to Bedford Borough Council for independent examination, following which there will be a further opportunity to see the Plan and comment in 2025 ('Regulation 16' consultation).

Once it has been confirmed that the Plan complies with legal requirements (has been assessed), all residents will be asked to vote to decide if the Plan should be formally adopted ('made') at a Referendum planned for 2025.

VISION

Based upon the consultation feedback to date, the following vision is proposed for Renhold.

COUNTRYSIDE - COMMUNITY - CONNECTIVITY

Countryside 'To preserve the distinctive character of our Parish, in particular the agricultural and parkland landscape that comprises the green gaps between the historic Ends and our newer developments, whilst also maintaining our separation from the Bedford urban area'.

Community 'To ensure that the needs and aspirations of residents of the Parish are reflected in the provision of appropriate community facilities and infrastructure that promote, sustain and enhance social cohesion'.

Connectivity 'To enhance the natural environment and biodiversity of the Parish and to amplify the benefits of this by connecting more people to nature through the creation of better, safer and more sustainable access to it'.

OBJECTIVES

To support the vision, the following objectives are proposed.

Countryside

- 1) To protect and enhance the distinctive character and historic environment of the Parish.
- 2) To preserve the green gaps between Renhold and the Bedford urban area and between each of the Renhold Ends to avoid physical and visual coalescence and to conserve character and identity.
- 3) To protect important views into, out of and within the Parish.
- 4) To protect and improve the countryside setting, biodiversity and wildlife habitats, including opportunities for enhanced public access where appropriate.

Community

- 5) To support well-integrated small-scale housing in appropriate locations to meet identified local needs.
- 6) To preserve the existing community facilities and support the provision of appropriate new facilities and infrastructure to meet identified local needs.

Connectivity

- 7) To preserve and enhance the existing Green Infrastructure network and promote active travel.
- 8) To reduce the impact of through traffic and improve non-vehicular transport.

POLICIES

Based upon the vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan, the following policies are proposed. In each case, the supporting rationale is explained.

POLICY 1: SMALL-SCALE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

'Housing development up to 10 affordable units will be supported, provided:

- a) It meets the specific needs identified in the current Housing Needs Survey.
- b) It positively contributes to the established character of the locality in which the development is proposed, promotes local distinctiveness and complements the built and natural environment in their immediate vicinity'.

Rationale:

The benefits of meeting small-scale housing needs at (an) appropriate location(s) in Renhold are as follows:

- a) An objective, independent assessment has identified a level of need using an evidence-based process.
- b) The case for small-scale housing developments to address local needs was supported by the majority of respondents in a bespoke community consultation.
- c) Defining the scale and location of appropriate levels of housing development in Renhold will create greater clarity for potential developers and should deter any speculative, larger-scale proposals that have been attempted in recent years.
- d) Such an approach is consistent with the policy provisions of the Bedford Local Plan 2030.

POLICY 2: RENHOLD DESIGN CODE

'Any development in Renhold should comply with the provisions of the Renhold Design Code'.

Rationale:

A Design Code has been produced for Renhold by AECOM (Architecture, Engineering, Construction, Operations and Management) which will:

- a) Give greater certainty that any new development in Renhold will comply with wider policy considerations on design, impact and sustainability.
- b) Safeguard the character of the existing local area.

POLICY 3: DARK SKIES

'Any development proposals that include new outdoor lighting installations will be expected to demonstrate that:

- a) Best practice is applied and lighting is designed to minimise or control the occurrence of light spillage and glare.
- b) The proposed lighting is the minimum appropriate for its purpose.
- c) There is no detrimental impact on residential amenity, highway safety or the Parish's recognised biodiversity assets.
- d) It complies with current guidelines for rural areas specified by the Institute of Lighting Professionals'.

Rationale:

Dark skies areas are an important element of landscape character and tranquillity in Renhold, and as a result they are particularly vulnerable to light pollution. In order to protect the dark skies areas and their special tranquil character, it is important to control and minimise the pollutive impact of external lighting.

POLICY 4: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Any development in Renhold must:

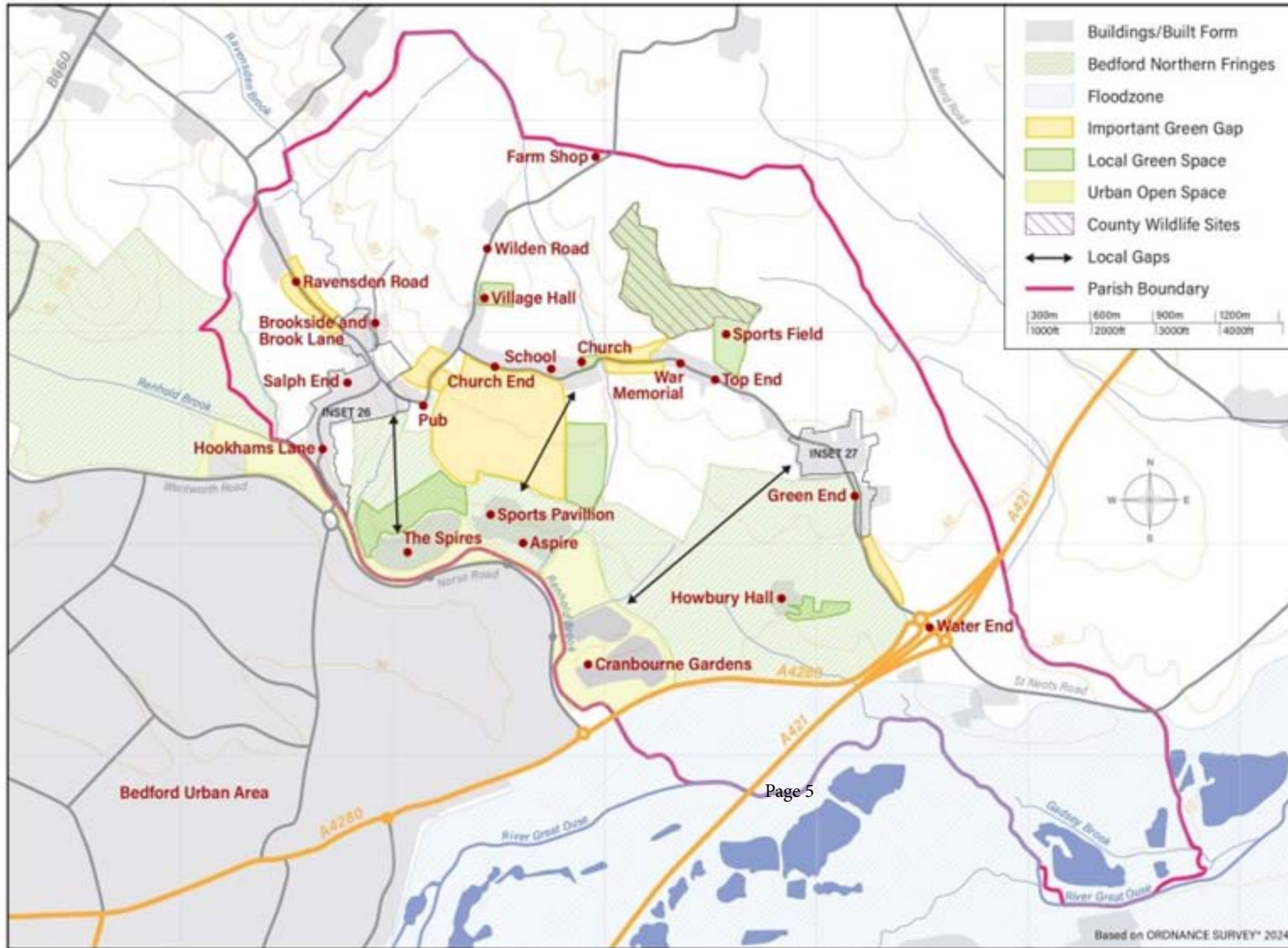
- a) Respect the rural character and historic environment.
- b) Preserve separation between the Bedford urban area and the parts of Renhold that are closest to it to avoid physical and visual coalescence.
- c) Protect and enhance the significant views identified in the Renhold Green Infrastructure Study.
- d) Conserve and enhance the open countryside, biodiversity and wildlife habitats including Local Green Space designation and green space improvements.
- e) Upgrade and extend public footpaths and bridleways where possible to provide a multi-functional Green Infrastructure network which encourages non-vehicular travel'.

Rationale:

Protecting green infrastructure from development will have the following benefits:

- a) It will continue to provide opportunities for the key features of the local environment to be identified and prioritised for potential protection and enhancement, and for new features/facilities potentially to be introduced.
- b) The existing rights of way network comprises a greatly valued community asset, but there are a number of access issues which can be highlighted through the Neighbourhood Plan.
- c) Such an approach is consistent with the policy provisions of the Bedford Local Plan 2030 and other relevant parts of the Local Plan evidence base.

A MAP ILLUSTRATING THE SPATIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED POLICIES



POLICY 5: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

‘The following sites designated as Local Green Spaces should be protected from development, unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances apply and development will not conflict with the purposes of their designation:

- a) Village Hall grounds.
- b) Renhold Primary School playing field.
- c) All Saints Churchyard.
- d) Little Early Grove and Great Early Grove
- e) Renhold Sports Field (including rough grassland area to north).
- f) The northern extension of Bedford Cemetery.
- g) Pedleys Field (Norse Road Greenspace)’.

Rationale:

The sites were assessed in the Green Infrastructure Study as complying with the designation criteria for protected Local Green Spaces and are therefore proposed for designation in the Neighbourhood Plan.

POLICY 6: IMPORTANT GREEN GAPS

‘Any development proposals, including change of use of existing buildings or land, must not compromise the openness, lead to coalescence or affect the undeveloped character of the designated Green Gaps identified in the Renhold Green Infrastructure Study’.

Rationale:

Protecting the spatial green gaps between the individual historically older and newer ‘Ends’ in the Parish from development will also have the following benefits:

- a) Renhold is rich in biodiversity and the green gaps provide an important resource for wildlife, allowing corridors of undeveloped land, across which species can travel and spread, to thrive and be enhanced. The Parish currently sustains important populations of nine of the most critically endangered ‘Red List’ bird species of conservation concern, all of which are dependent on the range of habitats in these green gaps.
- b) All of the green gaps are accessible via public rights of way, giving local residents the opportunity for recreation and physical activity in the areas closest to where they live, thus avoiding the need for vehicular use to access the countryside.
- c) Enabling preservation of the Parish’s tranquillity, rural nature and dark skies enjoyed by both wildlife and residents.
- d) Preventing coalescence in order to retain Renhold’s characteristic identity.

POLICY 7: HERITAGE ASSETS

‘Any proposals for development that result in the loss of or cause unacceptable harm to the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets or their settings will be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that the loss or harm is clearly and convincingly justified by the public benefits associated with the scheme’.

Rationale:

The Renhold Green Infrastructure Study identifies a number of important heritage assets in the Parish and states that ‘integrating these sites into green infrastructure plans can help to preserve parish history’.

POLICY 8: PROTECTION AND RETENTION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES

‘Development in Renhold which would involve the direct loss of identified community facilities will only be supported if the following can be demonstrated:

- a) The proposal includes equivalent replacement provision on a site within or immediately adjacent to an existing settlement in the Parish. Such facilities should be accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and have adequate on-site car parking; or
- b) There is no longer an economic justification to protect the facility (through the provision of satisfactory evidence of marketing over preceding 12 months); or
- c) The alternative proposal would be of sufficient benefit to the local community to outweigh the loss of the existing facility’.

Rationale:

- a) Community facilities promote and enhance community cohesion, providing places where local people can meet and socialise.
- b) The proximity of Renhold to Bedford means that larger scale community facilities like GP surgeries, specialist shops and larger-scale sports facilities are within easy reach for most parish residents, so it is not essential for them to be replicated at a local level. However, enhancing the quantity and quality of local-scale community provision within Renhold will improve accessibility for local people and promote sustainable living.

POLICY 9: MITIGATING TRANSPORT ISSUES

‘When considering any development that will generate additional vehicular traffic, the local planning authority should take account of the potential impact on existing transport issues in Renhold and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are included as a condition of any planning consent’.

Rationale:

The benefits of addressing those transport and travel issues in Renhold which are permissible and appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to consider are as follows:

- a) Existing traffic and parking issues can be highlighted and taken into account by the Local Planning Authority in relation to all proposed future developments and their potential impact on current transport issues in Renhold.
- b) Improving the Public Rights of Way network will provide opportunities for residents and visitors to Renhold to access the green spaces that make the Parish so special. It will also support sustainable non-vehicular travel within Renhold, which will address some of the wider transport problems.
- c) Linking with Rights of Way improvements proposed in the ‘made’ Ravensden Neighbourhood Plan (2023) that link with routes in Renhold.
- d) East-West Rail has the potential to fundamentally change the landscape and character of Renhold, so a policy on mitigation will highlight ways of minimising any impact.

OTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

For further details on the previous community consultation responses, evidence base and other influences of the formation of the draft policies, please view the full version of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan in the following ways:

- a) Online at: <https://renhold-pc.gov.uk/parish-sub-committees/np>
- b) At a 'Drop-in' session at Renhold Village Hall on Saturday 7th December 2024 from midday until 17.00.
- c) At The Chapter House within/rear of Renhold All Saints Church (9-5 daily) and the Village Shop during opening hours.

The following supporting documents are also available to view between 18th November 2024 and 13th January 2025 by the same means:

- Renhold Green Infrastructure Study (Beds Rural Communities Charity, 2022)
- Renhold Housing Needs Survey and Assessment (Beds Rural Communities Charity, 2022)
- Renhold Design Guidance and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan (AECOM, 2024)
- Renhold Environmental Screening Assessment Report (2024)
- Renhold Habitat Regulations Screening Report (2024)

FEEDBACK FORM

Please complete the form, detach it and return it by Monday 13th January 2025 to one of the collection boxes in the Parish at Renhold Primary School, the Village Shop, All Saints' Church, Renhold Chapel, Renhold Village Hall, The Spires and Cranbourne Parish Council noticeboards or the Fiona Way Pavilion at Aspire or via email to renhold.npwg@gmail.com

Where in the parish do you live? Please circle or tick your area

Water End Green End Top End Church End Salph End
 Ravensden Road The Spires Aspires Cranbourne Gardens

Please indicate whether you support the proposed vision

Yes	No	Suggested Amendments

Please indicate whether you support the proposed objectives

Yes	No	Suggested Amendments

Please indicate whether you support or oppose the proposed policies by ticking the boxes below

Policy	Support	Oppose	Unsure
Policy 1: Small-scale Housing Development			
Policy 2: Renhold Design Code			
Policy 3: Dark Skies			
Policy 4: Green Infrastructure			
Policy 5: Local Green Spaces			
Policy 6: Important Green Gaps			
Policy 7: Heritage Assets			
Policy 8: Community Facilities			
Policy 9: Mitigating Transport Issues			

Please let us have any other comments below and overleaf

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: