



RENHOLD PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT

JUNE 2025

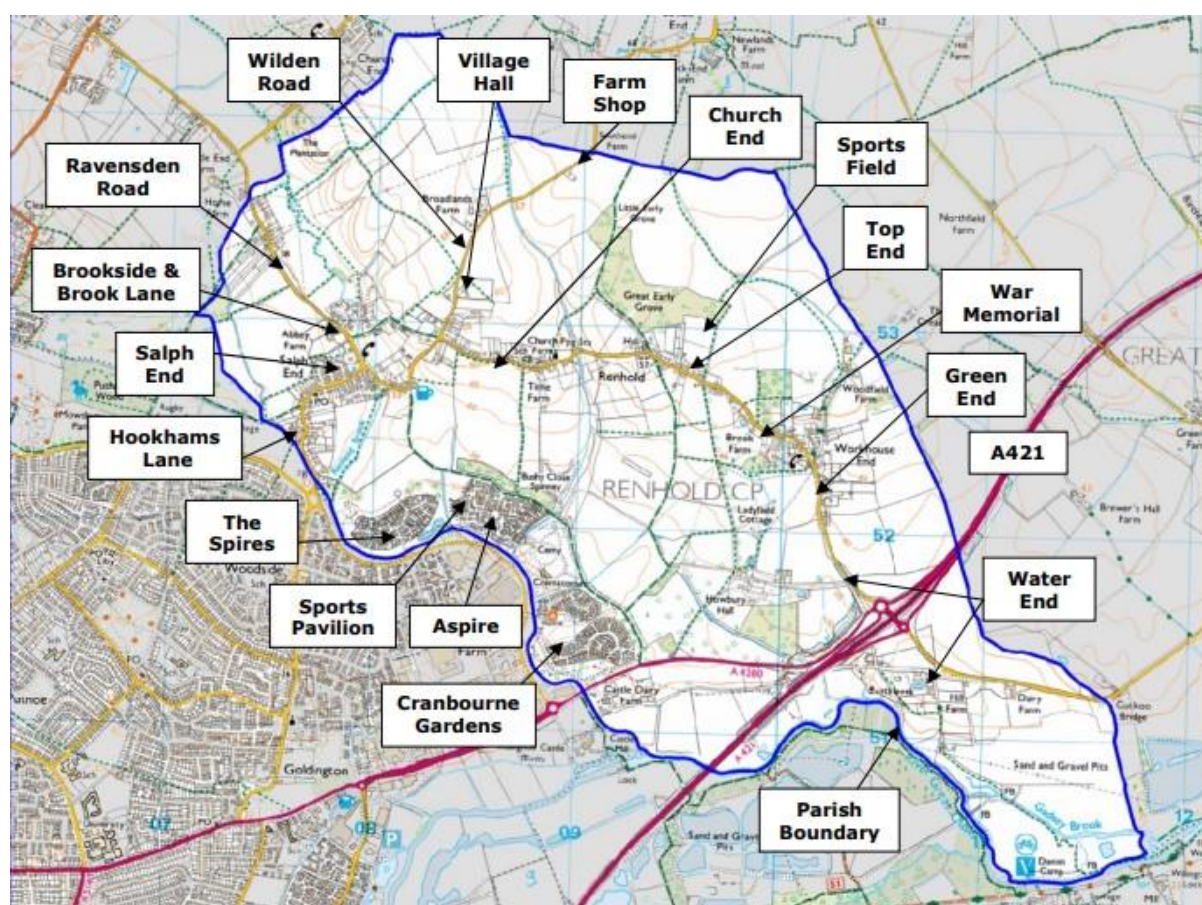
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Renhold Neighbourhood Plan

Basic Conditions Statement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Renhold Parish Council to accompany the Renhold Parish Neighbourhood Plan on submission to Bedford Borough Council (BBC) under regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 as amended ('the Regulations').
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Parish Council, the qualifying body, for the Neighbourhood Area covering the whole of the Parish, as designated by BBC on 7th September 2020 (See Figure 1 below).



- 1.3 The policies described in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area and do not relate to any other designated Neighbourhood Area.
- 1.4 The plan period is for five years up to 2030, a period which aligns to the current adopted Bedford Borough Council Local Plan.

- 1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan does not include provision about development that is excluded development in accordance with relevant legislation, namely The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Section 38B(1)(b) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 61K.
- 1.6 The Statement addresses and shows full compliance with each of the four ‘basic conditions’ required of the Regulations and explains how the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 1.7 The Regulations state that a Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the basic conditions if:
- Having regard to National Policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Development Plan.
 - The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
 - The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).
 - The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations.
- 1.8 In order to consider the requirements to be compatible with EU obligations, a further basic condition is set out in the Regulations, namely that ‘the making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017’.

2. **Background to the Neighbourhood Plan**

2.1 In 2020, Renhold Parish Council decided that a Neighbourhood Plan should be drawn up for the Parish. Its decision was influenced by a number of factors, including:

- Continuing pressure for significant new housing development adjacent to the urban edge of Bedford and in possible new settlements in neighbouring parishes.
- An aspiration that the Parish's unique local environment, character and heritage should be protected and enhanced.
- The need to interpret the provisions of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (and the subsequent consultation on the 2040 Local Plan process) in a local context.
- Concerns that the proposed route for a new railway linking Bedford and Cambridge could come through the Parish.

2.2 **Neighbourhood Plan process:** The Neighbourhood Plan has to meet a number of basic conditions to ensure it complies with the relevant legislation:

- There has to be a clear process of public consultation, and the Plan has to explain how consultation responses have been taken into account.
- It has to ensure that statutory environmental assessment and nature conservation requirements have been properly considered.
- An independent examiner, appointed by the Borough Council in consultation with the Parish Council, will review the submitted Plan and its supporting documents to ensure it meets the basic conditions. Following examination, the Inspector would then recommend whether or not it should proceed to a local referendum with or without any modifications.
- The Neighbourhood Plan only then comes into legal effect ('made') if a majority of those registered electors in the Parish, who take part in the local referendum, have voted in favour of it.

2.3 Having decided to produce a Neighbourhood Plan in August 2020, Renhold Parish Council applied for the whole Parish to be designated as a Neighbourhood Plan Area and this was approved by Bedford Borough Council on 7th September 2020.

2.4 A Neighbourhood Plan Working Group was then set up by the Parish Council. Its membership is made up of a number of residents from different parts of the Parish, together with several Parish Councillors. The Working Group's responsibility was the preparation of the Plan, including necessary research, preparing of background documents, community and stakeholder engagement, and statutory consultation.

2.5 **Community consultation and engagement:** The Working Group carried out extensive consultations to promote awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan in order to establish:

- What the community thinks about the Parish.

- What the community most values.
 - What should be retained, changed or improved in the Parish
 - The community's views on emerging proposals for public comment.
- 2.6 The methods employed to secure community engagement included:
- Hard copy questionnaires hand-delivered to every household in the Parish, supplemented by on-line versions.
 - Regular progress updates via the monthly Parish Council meetings, a Neighbourhood Plan page on the Parish Council's website and the Parish Council's social media channels.
 - Articles in the monthly Renhold Magazine.
 - Drop-in sessions at the Village Hall to enable face-to-face discussions on progress and emerging findings.
- 2.7 The Working Group has sought to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan reflects local needs and aspirations, where feedback has helped shape the content of this Plan. The evidence gathered from public consultation is considered at appropriate sections within the Plan.
- 2.8 A number of needs and aspirations identified through the consultation processes cover issues that fall outside the scope of the statutory planning system (for example community events, litter or traffic issues). These have therefore been referenced in a separate section of the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that they are properly recorded and provide a source of reference for the Parish Council to help produce a separate action plan.
- 2.9 ***External consultees:*** In addition to local community consultation, 107 statutory, voluntary and commercial external organisations were consulted on the draft vision, objectives and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.10 ***Additional research and analysis:*** The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group identified areas which would need additional professional assistance. To supplement the skills and expertise of its members, a number of external consultants or support groups were identified and approached to undertake bespoke studies in order to inform the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan. These bespoke studies included:
- A Green Infrastructure Plan (produced by the Bedford Rural Communities Charity).
 - Housing Needs Surveys in 2021 and 2025 (produced by the Bedford Rural Communities Charity).
 - A Parish Design Code (produced by the AECOM).

3. Conformity with National Planning Policy

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published on 27th March 2012 and has been subject to several subsequent iterations, most recently on 12th December 2024¹. The Parish Council has referred to the latest complete version of 2024 to provide guidance on the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 3.2 There are several NPPF paragraphs that provide general guidance on neighbourhood planning, to which the Neighbourhood Plan has directly responded. In relation to the presumption in favour of sustainable development:
- Paragraph 11 makes it clear that 'all plans' including Neighbourhood Plans 'should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to meet the development needs of the area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; and mitigate climate change (including making effective use of land) and adapt to its effects.'
 - Paragraph 12: The development plan is the starting point for decision-making, and this includes any Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Paragraph 13: 'Neighbourhood Plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies'.
 - Paragraph 14: '... involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply:
 - a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and
 - b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement (see paragraphs 69-70).'
- 3.3 The Parish Council considers that the Neighbourhood Plan is planning positively for any future development in the Parish and supports the delivery of the strategic policies of the adopted Development Plan as advised in the above paragraphs of the NPPF.
- Paragraphs 18 and 21: These paragraphs advise that policies to address non-strategic matters and detailed matters should be included within neighbourhood plans and the Renhold Neighbourhood Plan contains such policies.

¹ A minor amendment was published on 7th February 2025 to correct cross-references from footnotes 7 and 8 and amend the end of the first sentence of paragraph 155 to make its intent clear. For the avoidance of doubt the amendment to paragraph 155 is not intended to constitute a change to the policy set out in the Framework as published on 12th December 2024.

- Paragraphs 29, 30 and 31: The paragraphs provide advice on non-strategic policies and the role of neighbourhood plans. The Renhold Neighbourhood Plan establishes a shared vision for the area and its policies are intended to shape, direct and help deliver sustainable development. It has sought to translate objectives into a number of meaningful planning policies to complement other development plan policies for managing development.
- Paragraph 38: The Renhold Neighbourhood Plan meets the ‘basic conditions’ and other legal requirements as per this paragraph and as set out in paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3.4 The Renhold Neighbourhood Plan strikes a positive balance between the policy constraints of the Parish and the need to support the general requirements of the Local Authority’s development plan, as set out in section 5 below.
- 3.5 The Renhold Neighbourhood Plan avoids duplicating development plan policies by focussing on site-specific and other policies that translate the general requirements of the Local Plan into a local context. Once made, this Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the development plan for Bedford Borough and will be used in determining planning applications.
- 3.6 Set out below is a brief summary of how each policy conforms to the NPPF. The particular paragraphs referred to in the table are those considered the most relevant to each policy but are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible relevant paragraphs.
- 3.7 Overall, NPPF paragraph 31 states that ‘once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies’ in the Bedford Local Plan where they are deemed in conflict.

<i>Policy</i>	<i>NPPF Paragraph Number</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
Policy RNP1: Small-scale housing development	61, 62, 63, 64, 84	The policy reflects the NPPF requirement to meet housing needs identified by a Housing Need Assessment, including affordable housing.
Policy RNP2: Renhold Design Code	9, 11, 29, 130-140	The policy reflects NPPF guidance which emphasises the importance of good design and its contribution to sustainability; the need for clear design vision and expectations in plans and for policies which reflect local aspirations based on effective community engagement. Design Codes can maximise clarity about design expectations.
Policy RNP3: Dark Skies	29, 30, 31, 198c	The policy reflects the NPPF requirement that planning policies and decisions should ‘limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation’.

<i>Policy</i>	<i>NPPF Paragraph Number</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
Policy RNP4: Green Infrastructure	103, 104, 105, 187, 192, 193, 195	The policy reflects the NPPF stipulation that open space policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. The Renhold GI Plan fulfils this requirement.
Policy RNP5: Local Green Spaces	103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 187, 192, 193, 195	The designated Local Green Spaces comply with the criteria stated in the NPPF.
Policy RNP6: Important Green Gaps	84, 103, 104, 105, 187, 192, 193, 195	The policy complies with the NPPF requirement that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside and protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.
Policy RNP7: Heritage assets	202, 205, 206-221	The policy reflects the guidance in the NPPF with respect to the conservation and enhancement of both designated and undesignated heritage assets and their settings, which contribute to the character of the Parish.
Policy RNP8: Protection and retention of community facilities	88, 96, 98	This policy reflects NPPF guidance in relation to policies which safeguard against the unnecessary loss of valued community facilities and services.
Policy RNP9: Mitigating transport issues	109, 110, 111, 112, 118	This policy is consistent with the NPPF which advises that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan making so that potential impacts can be identified, assessed and taken into account including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects and for net environmental gains.

4. Contribution to sustainable development

4.1 The basic condition of ‘contributing to the achievement of sustainable development’ requires a broad scope of assessment to embrace social and economic, as well as environmental objectives.

4.2 The policies and objectives defined within the Renhold Neighbourhood Plan comprise a balance of social, economic and environmental goals required to fully realise the vision for the Parish, defined and supported by NP consultation. The Vision is:

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 structural 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’.***

4.3 The social goals are to improve local amenities and green infrastructure, meet future housing needs, where appropriate, and encourage safe and sustainable movement across the Parish.

4.4 The Economic goals include the protection of existing community assets and ensuring the continuing vitality of the Parish.

4.5 The environmental goals relate to design and sustainability; landscape, biodiversity, heritage, green infrastructure and local green spaces.

4.6 However, the objectives recognise there are environmental constraints within which the social and economic objectives must operate, by ensuring development is in keeping with the predominantly rural character of the Parish. The policies therefore translate the objectives of the Renhold Neighbourhood Plan into viable and effective development management policies which will deliver strong social, economic and environmental outcomes. The sustainability attributes of each policy are summarised in the table below. The symbols denote:

Positive impact: +

Neutral impact: 0

Negative impact: -

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Economic</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
Policy RNP1: Small-scale housing development	+	+	0	Small-scale housing development based upon identified local needs will create more affordable homes for local people, providing economic benefit and minimising environmental impact.
Policy RNP2: Renhold Design Code	+	+	+	Detailed measures to encourage all planning applications to follow best practice in design and sustainability and respect the new Design Codes and guidelines will result in social, environmental and economic benefits to the Parish.
Policy RNP3: Dark Skies	+	0	+	The dark skies policy has very significant benefits for the natural environment and preservation of the rural character of the parish has social benefits.
Policy RNP4: Green Infrastructure	+	0	+	The preservation and enhancement of green infrastructure supports health and wellbeing and sustains and enhances biodiversity.
Policy RNP5: Local Green Spaces	+	+	+	Allocating sites as Local Green Spaces gives extra protection from development whilst bringing social and environmental benefits with improved biodiversity and economic advantages by enhancing local amenities.
Policy RNP6: Important Green Gaps	+	0	+	The important green gaps maintain the integrity and character of the existing settlement pattern and social networks.
Policy RNP7: Heritage assets	+	0	+	The policy protects listed buildings and their setting and other features of conservation interest/importance that benefit the local community and environment.

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Economic</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
Policy RNP8: Protection and retention of community facilities	+	+	+	The policy protects local community assets which are important to the vitality of the Parish or to ensure suitable replacement facilities are built if there is still need for them. This supports rural character and is beneficial to both the environment and the social interactions of residents.
Policy RNP9: Mitigating transport issues	+	0	+	This policy ensures detailed measures to mitigate worst impacts thus protecting the local environment and rural character.

5. General conformity with Strategic Local Policies

- 5.1 Local Development Plan documents currently consist of the saved policies of the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013 (ADLP) and the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030. The Local Plan includes new policies for management of development as well as allocating sites for new housing and employment development. There is a requirement for neighbourhood plans to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and the Renhold Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with this in mind.
- 5.2 The following table sets out the comparison of the Renhold Neighbourhood Plan policies with policies from both extant Local Plans. In conclusion, the Renhold Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the Local Plans and the policies have been designed to add local context to the Bedford BC Development Plan policies of the area.

<i>Policy</i>	<i>BBC Local Plan and ADLP</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
Policy RNP1: Small-scale housing development	LP Policies 3S (viii and ix), 4S, 5S, 6, 7S 28S, 46S, 59S and 67	This policy is consistent with the overall spatial strategy contained in the Borough Local Plan 2030 and its policies for Small Settlements, sustainability and affordable housing.
Policy RNP2: Renhold Design Code	LP Policies 6, 7S, 29, 30, 31, 37, 38, 39, 40, 52-55, 65, 66, 92 and 93	The policy particularly supports Local Plan Policy 30 in relation to Design Codes, as well as the additional policy provisions relating to landscape settings.
Policy RNP3: Dark Skies	LP Policies 32 and 47S	The policy reflects these Local Plan Policies in terms of minimising and taking account of the effects of pollution and disturbance , which specifically reference ‘light glare’ and avoiding ‘any significant impact of artificial light on local amenity’.
Policy RNP4: Green Infrastructure	LP Policies 2S, 35S, 37, 39, 40, 42S, 44 and 91, AD24 and AD40. (Also, BBC Open Space SPD 2013)	The policy particularly supports Local Plan Policy 36S and also the Open Space SPD, which is heavily referenced in the Renhold Green Infrastructure Plan.
Policy RNP5: Local Green Spaces	LP Policies 35S and 45, AD24 and AD40	The designated Local Green Spaces comply with these policy criteria.
Policy RNP6: Important Green Gaps	LP Policies 37, 42S and 44 (Also, BBC Open Space SPD 2013)	The policy complies with Local Plan Policies relating to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, as well as protecting the landscape setting and contributing to maintaining the individual and distinct character, and separate identities of settlements by preventing coalescence.
Policy RNP7: Heritage assets	LP Policy 41S	This policy complements and provides local context for the protection of designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings, which contribute to local character.

<i>Policy</i>	<i>BBC Local Plan and ADLP</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
Policy RNP8: Protection and retention of community facilities	LP Policies 97, 98 and 99	This policy is consistent with the Local Plan policies to safeguard community facilities.
Policy RNP9: Mitigating transport issues	LP Policies 88, and 90S	This policy is consistent with these Local Plan Policies that requires developers to mitigate the social and environmental impact that vehicular traffic will cause.

6. Compatibility with EU legislation

- 6.1 **Strategic Environmental Assessment:** The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations require the consideration of the significant environmental effects of the plan or programme, and of reasonable alternatives that take into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme.
- 6.2 A screening report has been prepared by Renhold Parish Council (as the Responsible Body) to determine whether or not the content of the Renhold Neighbourhood Plan (NP) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the extant regulations. This document accompanies the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.3 In accordance with current government advice, the first part of the assessment determined that the NP falls into a category of plans requiring SEA. The second part of the assessment considered whether the NP is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, using criteria drawn from Schedule 1 of the EU SEA Directive and the UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The assessment concluded that it is unlikely there will be any significant environmental effects arising from the Renhold Neighbourhood Plan and that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is therefore not required.
- 6.4 Three statutory consultation bodies (Historic England, Environment Agency and Natural England) were consulted in November 2024. In its response, Natural England confirmed their satisfaction with the conclusion of no likely significant effect on designated sites as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan. No other statutory consultees responded to this consultation and the SEA.
- 6.5 **Habitat Regulations Assessment:** The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 [the Habitats Regulations] require that Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is applied to all statutory land use plans in England and Wales. HRA is achieved by carrying out an Appropriate Assessment. This is undertaken, with consideration that an assessment on the Bedford Local Plan 2030 was carried out in 2018 and National Site Networks (2019).
- 6.6 Renhold Parish Council undertook a screening of the Neighbourhood Plan in November 2024 to ensure that the NP contains relevant policies which avoid or mitigate against likely significant effects identified in the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 and comply with those of Bedford Borough. The screening assumed that water quantity and quality in the River Great Ouse will not be compromised.
- 6.7 The HRA screening concluded that the Renhold Neighbourhood Plan can proceed as it will not have adverse impacts on any National Site Network sites, the qualifying features and/or the integrity of those sites itself or in combination with other plans that have currently been adopted. These conclusions were endorsed by responses received from statutory consultation bodies in January 2025.

- 6.8 ***Human Rights and Equalities Assessment:*** The Renhold Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act. The overall purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to improve the quality of life for people living and working in the parish from an environmental, social and economic point of view. The aims and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan have been formulated in response to local people's views and in the light of evidence gathered for the Parish, in order to meet the needs expressed and address the issues identified.
- 6.9 In order to confirm that the NP does not have any unintended consequences for particular groups the strategic aims and the policies in the Plan have been scrutinised to ensure that they do not disadvantage any potentially vulnerable groups. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on all public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between persons who have a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.
- 6.10 An assessment has been made on whether the policies in the Renhold Neighbourhood Plan have a positive, negative or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics. Certain protected characteristics are not affected by the Neighbourhood Plan, namely gender reassignment, race, religion, or sexual orientation. For persons with these characteristics, the Plan has a neutral effect. Where policies in the Plan would adversely affect persons with these protected characteristics, they would not be differently affected than persons without these characteristics.

<i>Policy</i>	<i>Impact for persons with protected characteristics</i>
Policy RNP1: Small-scale housing development	Broadly positive impact
Policy RNP2: Renhold Design Code	Broadly positive impact
Policy RNP3: Dark Skies	Neutral Impact
Policy RNP4: Green Infrastructure	Broadly positive impact
Policy RNP5: Local Green Spaces	Broadly positive impact
Policy RNP6: Important Green Gaps	Broadly positive impact
Policy RNP7: Heritage assets	Neutral impact
Policy RNP8: Protection and retention of community facilities	Broadly positive impact
Policy RNP9: Mitigating transport issues	Broadly positive impact

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The Renhold Neighbourhood Plan has been carefully prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations and satisfies the basic conditions as set out in paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, thereby contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.