



PLAN-IT X
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING SERVICES

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan

Basic Conditions Statement

March 2025

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RTPI

mediation of space - making of place

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Basic Conditions Statement has been prepared to accompany the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan. It explains how the proposed Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning General Regulations 2012 (as amended) (The Regulations) and how the basic conditions of neighbourhood planning, and other considerations as prescribed by Paragraph 11 of Schedule A2 of the Town and Country Planning Act 2004 have been met.
- 1.2 Paragraph 11 of Schedule A2 to the Town and Country Planning Act 2004 requires that Neighbourhood Development Plans must meet the following basic conditions:
- i. the Neighbourhood Development Plan must have appropriate regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - ii. the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - iii. the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the local planning authority, in this case the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (Adopted July 2016) and the Kettering Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (Adopted December 2021);
 - iv. the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan must meet the relevant EU obligations; and
 - v. prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 1.3 This Basic Conditions Statement addresses these requirements in five sections:
- Section 2 demonstrates the conformity of the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance;
 - Section 3 shows how the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan will contribute to sustainable development;
 - Section 4 demonstrates the conformity of the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan with the adopted North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (2016) and Kettering Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan 2011 - 2031 (2021);
 - Section 5 demonstrates compliance with the appropriate EU obligations and other prescribed matters; and
 - Section 6 addresses other basic conditions that apply besides those set out in the primary legislation.

- 1.4 The Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan is supported by a Consultation Statement, Equality Impact Assessment (included in this document at Appendix 1) and this Basic Conditions Statement.

Submitting Body

- 1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan is submitted by Grafton Underwood Parish Council, which is a statutory Qualifying Body as defined by the Localism Act 2011.

Neighbourhood Area

- 1.6 This Plan applies to the Parish of Grafton Underwood. Grafton Underwood Parish Council applied for the Neighbourhood Area designation. In accordance with Regulation 6, East Northamptonshire Council¹, on behalf of the relevant body (Grafton Underwood Parish Council), completed the necessary statutory process to enable designation of the Grafton Underwood Parish area as a Neighbourhood Area. On 3 June 2019, East Northamptonshire Council designed the whole of Grafton Underwood Parish as a Neighbourhood Area, in accordance with Regulation 7.
- 1.7 The Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan relates only to the development and use of land within the Parish of Grafton Underwood and to no other Neighbourhood Areas.
- 1.8 The Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan is the only Neighbourhood Development Plan in the designated area. No other Neighbourhood Development Plan exists nor is being prepared for part or all of the designated area.
- 1.9 The Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan covers the period 2022 to 2041 to align with the emerging New North Northamptonshire Local Plan.
- 1.10 No provision for excluded development such as national infrastructure, minerals or waste development is contained within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Grafton Underwood: Location

- 1.11 The Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan covers the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Area, comprising the parish of Grafton Underwood which is located within North Northamptonshire. The

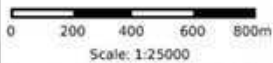
¹ Following local government reorganisation, North Northamptonshire Council came into being on 1 April 2021. The North Northamptonshire unitary area covers the former district and borough councils of Corby, East Northants, Kettering and Wellingborough which have been abolished.

parish is a rural area (737 hectares) with a population of 130 and 60 homes (Census Day 2021).

- 1.12 The only settlement is Grafton Underwood village located centrally within the Neighbourhood Area. It has developed as an estate village associated with the Duke of Buccleugh's Estate of Boughton. One of the key features of the village is the Alledge Brook. The village has been formed along its course producing a linear settlement pattern. The main street runs through its centre, along the eastern edge of the Alledge Brook, with most development laid out either side of the Brook.
- 1.13 The Parish is also within the area of the former Rockingham Forest and includes a former Second World War airbase and runway.

Involvement of the Local Community and Stakeholders

- 1.14 The Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Grafton Underwood Parish Council, with input from the community and stakeholders as set out in the accompanying Consultation Statement. The Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan has been consulted on as required by the Regulations and the responses have been recorded and changes have been made as per the schedule set out in the Consultation Statement.



Author: R. Cole

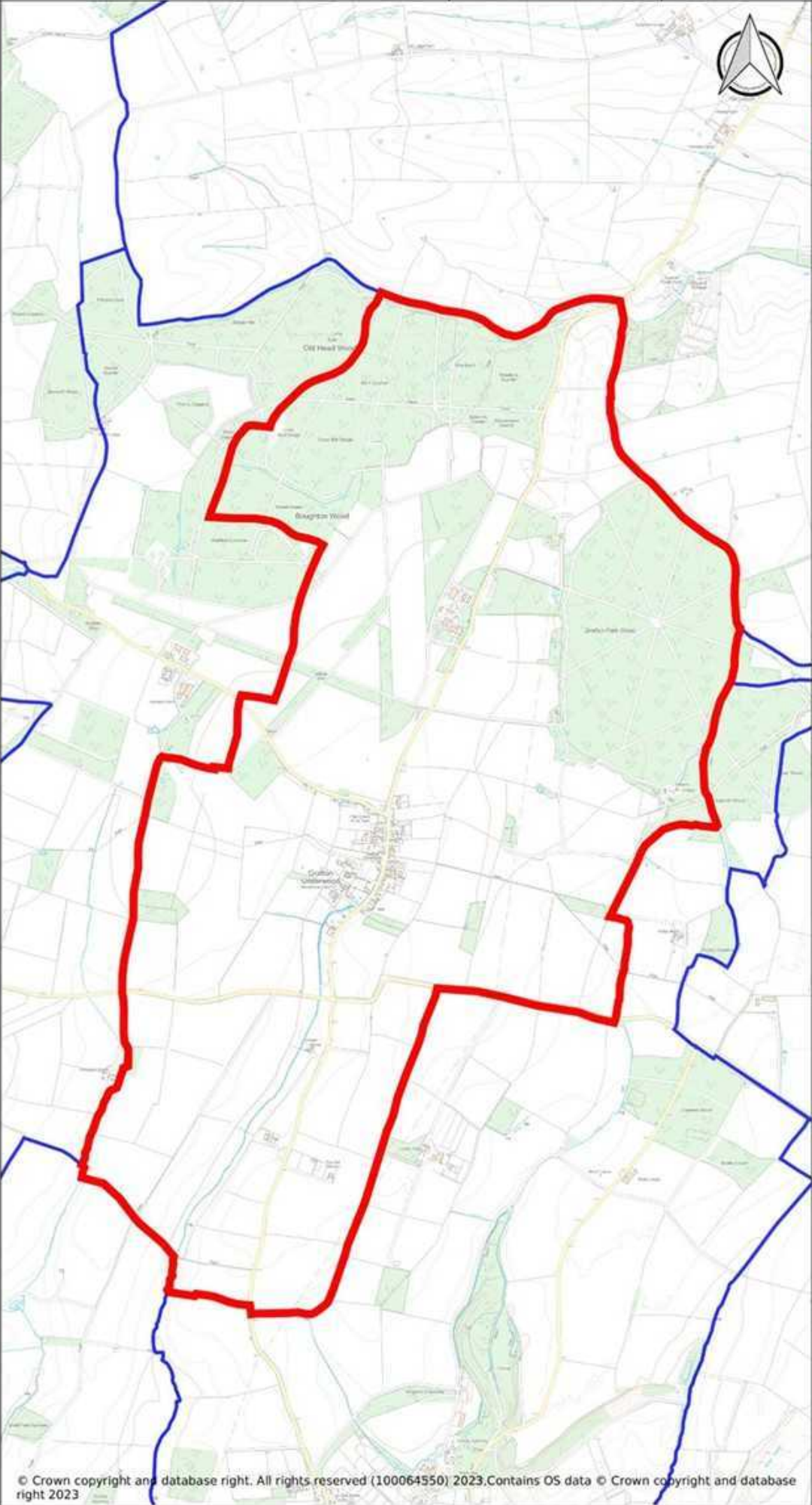
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Parish



Neighbourhood Plan Area



2. Conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.1 It is required that the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. This is principally provided by the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. The updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 12 December 2024 and it is against this version of the NPPF which the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed.
- 2.2 It should be noted that not all sections of the National Planning Policy Framework will be relevant to the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan as there is no legal requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan to provide policies covering all the provisions within the National Planning Policy Framework. However, where a Neighbourhood Plan expresses a policy it must have appropriate regard to the relevant parts of the National Planning Policy Framework, as well as the Planning Practice Guidance.
- 2.3 A key theme that runs throughout the National Planning Policy Framework is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF specifies that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. In order to achieve sustainable development, the Framework has three overarching objectives, economic, social and environmental.
- 2.4 This section considers the conformity of the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan in respect of relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. Planning Practice Guidance is published on a dedicated website available at [Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/planning-practice-guidance)
- 2.5 The areas of Planning Practice Guidance which have been particularly relevant to the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan, in addition to the guidance on Neighbourhood Planning are:
- Design: process and tools.
 - Healthy and Safe Communities.
 - Historic Environment
 - Light Pollution
 - Natural Environment.
 - Open space, sports and recreational facilities, public rights of way and local green space.
 - Housing for Older and Disabled People.
 - Housing Needs of Different Groups.
 - Renewable and low carbon energy

- Transport evidence bases in plan making and decision taking

2.6 The following table identifies the sections of the National Planning Policy Framework that the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan conforms with and provides a supporting commentary. Reference is also made to the relevant Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	National Planning Policy Framework	Planning Practice Guidance	Commentary
Policy GU1: Landscape Character and Locally Important Views - Development should be located and designed so that it is sensitive to its landscape setting as well as safeguard, and enhance where possible, a number of identified views.	Paragraphs 20, 135, 187	How can planning policies conserve and enhance landscapes? (Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721) How are well-designed places achieved through the planning system? (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 26-001-20191001)	This policy allows account to be taken of the different roles and characters of areas and recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
Policy GU2: Access to the Countryside - Seeks development to protect Rights of Way and create new links to the network. Encourages the creation of specific off-road cycle/footpath links.	Paragraph 105	How can positive planning contribute to healthier communities? (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID:53-001-20190722) What is a healthy place? (Paragraph: 003 Reference ID:53-003-20191101)	This policy takes account of the different roles and character of different areas as well as seeks to support the multiple benefits from the use of rural areas, such as recreation and wellbeing, and maximise opportunities for walking and cycling.

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	National Planning Policy Framework	Planning Practice Guidance	Commentary
Policy GU3: Dark Night Skies - Proposals must demonstrate opportunities have been taken to reduce light pollution and negative impacts. Any adverse impacts to be mitigated against.	Paragraph 198	What light pollution considerations does planning need to address? (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 31-001-20191101) What factors can be considered when assessing whether a development proposal might have implications for light pollution? (Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 31-002-20191101) What factors are relevant when considering where light shines? (Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 31-003-20191101) What factors are relevant when considering how much the light shines? (Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 31-005-20191101)	This policy seeks for development to be appropriate for its location and considers the impact of light pollution. Limits the impact on the locality and intrinsically dark landscape.

Policy GU4: Renewable Energy - Identifies those circumstances renewable energy development will be supported, taking into account local circumstances.	Paragraphs 161, 165 & 168	Why is planning for renewable and low carbon energy important? (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 5-001-20140306) How can local planning authorities develop a positive strategy to promote the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy? (Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 5-003-20140306) Do criteria based policies have a role in planning for renewable energy? (Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 5-007-20140306) What are the planning considerations that relate to specific renewable energy technologies? (Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 5-010-20140306) What are the particular planning considerations that relate to large scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic farms? (Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 5-013-20150327) What are the particular planning considerations that relate to wind turbines? (Paragraph: 014 Reference ID: 5-014-20150618)	Supports the provision of renewable energy infrastructure whilst seeking to ensure adverse impact is avoided and addressed.
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Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	National Planning Policy Framework	Planning Practice Guidance	Commentary
		Do local people have the final say on wind farm applications? (Paragraph: 033 Reference ID: 5-033-150618)	
Policy Gu5: Local Green Spaces - Identifies several local green spaces. New development within this designation will only be supported in very special circumstances.	Paragraphs 106-108	What is Local Green Space designation? (Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 37-005-20140306) How is land designated as Local Green Space? (Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 37-006-20140306) How does Local Green Space designation relate to development? (Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 37-007-20140306) What if land has planning permission for development? (Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 37-008-20140306) Can all communities benefit from Local Green Space? (Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 37-009-20140306)	Regard is had to national policy which allows for neighbourhood plans to identify for the protection green areas of importance to them. The Local Green Spaces meet the criteria set out in paragraph 107 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The full reasons for designation are included in the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base.

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	National Planning Policy Framework	Planning Practice Guidance	Commentary
Policy GU6: Ecology and Biodiversity - Expects development not to harm the network of local ecological features and habitats. New development will be expected to maintain and enhance these features and secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.	Paragraphs 162, 187, 188, 192	Is there a statutory basis for planning to seek to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible? (Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 8-009-20190721) How can planning authorities plan for biodiversity and geodiversity? (Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 8-010-20190721) What evidence needs to be taken into account in identifying and mapping local ecological networks? (Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 8-011-20190721) What is biodiversity net gain? (Paragraph: 022 Reference ID: 8-022-20190721) How can biodiversity net gain be achieved? (Paragraph: 023 Reference ID: 8-023-20190721)	The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that pursuing sustainable development includes moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature, and that a core principle for planning is that it should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. This policy seeks to minimise impacts on biodiversity and seek positives in biodiversity. It also has identified and mapped components of local ecological networks and features.
Policy GU7: Ancient Woodland – Seeks the	Paragraphs 136, 187 & 193	How can I find out whether an area contains ancient woodland?	This policy seeks to protect the natural environment and mitigation where

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	National Planning Policy Framework	Planning Practice Guidance	Commentary
protection and restoration of ancient woodland as well as the protection of ancient and veteran trees.		(Paragraph: 031 Reference ID: 8-031-20190721) How can I find out whether a site contains ancient or veteran trees? (Paragraph: 032 Reference ID: 8-032-20190721) How can local planning authorities assess the potential impact of development proposals on ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees? (Paragraph: 033 Reference ID: 8-033-20190721) What compensation can be provided if development resulting in loss or harm is, exceptionally, permitted? (Paragraph: 034 Reference ID: 8-034-20190721)	appropriate. Development resulting in the loss of ancient trees and ancient woodland will not be supported.
Policy GU8: Trees and Hedgerows - Existing trees should be retained/integrated into new development. Policy seeks to resist	Paragraphs 136, 187 & 193	What are the considerations when planning for trees within settlements? (Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 8-029-20190721)	This policy supports the conservation and enhancement of the natural and local environment. Development resulting in the loss of ancient trees will not be supported.

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	National Planning Policy Framework	Planning Practice Guidance	Commentary
development that damages or results in the loss of ancient trees, hedgerows or trees of good arboricultural or amenity value. Replanting is supported where appropriate.		How can I find out whether an area contains ancient woodland? (Paragraph: 031 Reference ID: 8-031-20190721) How can I find out whether a site contains ancient or veteran trees? (Paragraph: 032 Reference ID: 8-032-20190721) How can local planning authorities assess the potential impact of development proposals on ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees? (Paragraph: 033 Reference ID: 8-033-20190721)	
Policy GUg: Local Heritage Assets - The impact of development on a number of features of local heritage interest will be assessed in terms of their harm or loss of the asset and the significance of the asset. Includes the protection of ridge and furrow sites.	Paragraphs 203, 205, 206, 207, 208, 216	How can heritage issues be addressed in neighbourhood plans? (Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 18a-005-20190723) What are non-designated heritage assets? (Paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 18a-039-20190723) How are non-designated heritage assets identified?	This policy supports the conservation of heritage assets. It recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and seeks their conservation and enhancement and plans positively with respect to non-designated heritage assets. Heritage assets within the plan area have been identified so they can be appropriately considered.

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	National Planning Policy Framework	Planning Practice Guidance	Commentary
		(Paragraph: 040 Reference ID: 18a-040-20190723)	
Policy GU10: Design – Development should reflect the local character and distinctiveness and satisfy the requirements of the Grafton Underwood Design Guide. Appropriate regard should also be had to residential amenity.	Paragraphs 29, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135 & 139	How are well-designed places achieved through the planning system? (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 26-001-20191001) How can plans support well-designed places? (Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 26-002-20191001) What role can non-strategic policies play? (Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 26-004-20191001) What are local design guides? (Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 26-005-20191001)	This policy seeks to secure high quality design. The subject of good design is attributed great importance in the National Planning Policy Framework and is a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people. This policy has regard to this approach and facilitates the promotion or reinforcement of local distinctiveness. It seeks to deliver development that is of a design that reflects the local area.
Policy GU11: Retention of Services and Facilities - Supports the protection of identified services and facilities.	Paragraphs 88 & 98	How can positive planning contribute to healthier communities? (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 53-001-20190722) What is a healthy place?	The policy supports the retention and development of local services and community facilities in the village and plans positively against their unnecessary loss and seeks improvement of facilities that meet day to day needs.

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	National Planning Policy Framework	Planning Practice Guidance	Commentary
		(Paragraph: 003 Reference ID:53-003-20191101)	
Policy GU12: Housing Mix - Expects development to demonstrate how the needs of older and smaller households will be met.	Paragraph 63	How do the housing need of particular groups relate to overall housing need calculated using the standard method? (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 67-001-20190722) Why is it important to plan for the housing needs of older people? (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 63-001-20190626) What range of needs should be addressed? (Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 63-003-20190626) What evidence can plan-makers consider when identifying the housing needs of older people? (Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 63-004-20190626) How can the housing requirements of particular groups of people be addressed in plans? (Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 63-006-20190626).	The Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan seeks to facilitate a mix of housing in its neighbourhood area that reflects local need and demand. Priority is given to the provision of smaller and modest sized homes.

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	National Planning Policy Framework	Planning Practice Guidance	Commentary
Policy Gu13: Rural Housing – In the countryside, support for housing development will be limited. The subdivision of existing residential dwellings, the re-use and/or adaptation of rural buildings, rural worker accommodation and replacement dwellings will be supported.	Paragraph 84	How can planning policies support sustainable rural communities? (Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 67-009-20190722)	This policy supports the re-use of redundant or disused buildings in the countryside
Policy GU14: Rural Worker Accommodation – Supports the provision of rural worker accommodation subject to criteria.	Paragraph 84	How can the need for isolated homes in the countryside for essential rural workers be assessed? (Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 67-010-20190722)	This policy supports rural worker accommodation in the countryside.
Policy GU15: Business Conversion of Rural Buildings - The re-use and adaptation of redundant and extension of rural buildings for business use will be supported. Regard should be had to scale,	Paragraphs 88 & 89	Not applicable.	This policy supports sustainable economic development in accordance with the NPPF. It plans to support economic growth in rural areas whilst respecting the character of the area.

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	National Planning Policy Framework	Planning Practice Guidance	Commentary
historic assets, local character, protected species, traffic generation and character of the surrounding area.			
Policy GU16: Working from Home - Supports development that facilitates working from home providing it is in keeping with the character of the area, does no adversely harm residential amenity and provides for a safe and suitable access.	Paragraphs 88 & 89	Not applicable.	This policy supports sustainable economic development in accordance with the NPPF. It plans to support economic growth in rural areas and takes a positive approach in this respect.
Policy GU17: Former Grafton Underwood Airfield – Supports its heritage conservation and role as a tourism destination subject to criteria.	Paragraphs 88, 202 & 203	How can heritage issues be addressed in neighbourhood plans? (Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 18a-005-20190723)	This policy supports sustainable rural tourism whilst protecting and enhancing the heritage value and features of this asset.
Policy GU18: Timber Yard, Former Grafton Underwood Airfield - Supports the economic	Paragraphs 88 & 89	Not applicable.	This policy supports sustainable economic development in accordance with the NPPF. It plans to support economic

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	National Planning Policy Framework	Planning Practice Guidance	Commentary
use of this site subject to criteria.			growth in rural areas and takes a positive approach in this respect.
Policy GU19: Parking - Expects new development to provide appropriate parking provision in accordance with the Highway Authority standards.	Paragraph 109	Why establish a transport evidence base for Local Plans (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 54-001-20141010)	This policy seeks to provide the appropriate level of car parking infrastructure to support new development and to avoid exacerbating the adverse impacts being experienced by on-street parking.

3. Contributing to sustainable development

- 3.1 Sustainable development is about positive growth- making economic, environmental, and social progress for this and future generations. The Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development of which there are three dimensions: economic, social, and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform several roles:
- a) an **economic** objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordination the provision of infrastructure.
 - b) a **social** objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural wellbeing; and
 - c) an **environmental** objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 3.2 The following section summarises how the above sustainability objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework compare with the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. This has been done by assessing the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan against each of the Planning Policy 'subjects' as contained within Sections 5 to 17 of the NPPF.

National Planning Policy Framework	How the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan supports objective
1 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes	Provides a steer as to where new housing should be focused and the form development should take, supporting a supply and mix of housing types to meet local needs, including the housing needs of older households as well as the provision of smaller homes.

National Planning Policy Framework	How the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan supports objective
2 – Building a strong, competitive economy	Supports sustainable economic growth through the business conversion of rural buildings, home working and diversification. Supports sustainable tourism. Seeks the retention and improvement of key local facilities, supporting the vitality of the community.
3 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres	The village of Grafton Underwood has a limited services and facilities, and an ambition of the plan is to protect the vitality of the community, supporting the retention of these existing services and facilities.
4 – Promoting healthy and safe communities	Seeks the protection of the countryside, local green spaces and Rights of Way, and provision of footpath links and cycle ways, as well as community and informal recreational facilities. Provides opportunities for people to meet and protect quality of life.
5 – Promoting sustainable development	Supports the re-use and conversion of buildings, home working and sustainable economic growth.
6 – Supporting high quality communications	Not applicable.
7 – Making effective use of land	Supports the re-use and conversion of redundant and rural buildings.
8 – Achieving well-designed places	Includes policies to require development to respect the scale, form and character of its surroundings, and local materials and features, including landscape as well as the built environment. Seeks the protection of residential amenity and the protection of the countryside and the setting of Grafton Underwood.
9 - Protecting Green Belt Land	Not applicable
10 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change	Safeguards Rights of Way and seeks the creation of new footpath links. Supports the conversion and re-use and adaptation of existing buildings. As there are well-established national and local policies that manage development and flood risk, there is no need for the Neighbourhood Plan to duplicate them. Supports the provision of appropriate renewable energy infrastructure.

National Planning Policy Framework	How the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan supports objective
11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	Protects the character of the countryside, the network of local ecological features and habitats and Local Green Space. Protects natural landscape from the harmful impacts of development. Requires the impact of development to maintain and enhance ecological corridors and landscape features for biodiversity.
12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	Prevents against the loss of the historic environment, including non-designated assets of local importance. Seeks to positively contribute to, and manage, the district's historic environment.
13 - Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals	Not applicable.

4. Conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan

- 4.1 Neighbourhood Development Plans must demonstrate that they are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted development plan for the local area. The current adopted plan for the area is the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (Adopted 2016) and Kettering Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan (Adopted 2021).
- 4.2 The following section identifies how the policies of the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan are in general conformity with the relevant strategic policies of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (Adopted 2016) and the Kettering Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan (Adopted December 2021).

North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011 - 2031

- 4.3 The Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan is considered to conform to the following policies of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. The table below provides a further explanation of the conformity.

Policy 2:	Historic Environment
Policy 3:	Landscape Character
Policy 4:	Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Policy 7:	Community Services and Facilities
Policy 8:	North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Principles
Policy 11:	The Network of Urban and Rural Areas
Policy 15:	Well-Connected Towns, Villages and Neighbourhoods
Policy 19:	The Delivery of Green Infrastructure
Policy 21:	Rockingham Forest
Policy 22:	Delivering Economic Prosperity
Policy 25:	Rural Economic Development and Diversification
Policy 26:	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
Policy 30:	Housing Mix and Tenure

- 4.4 Policy 1 is the overarching Joint Core Strategy and takes a proactive approach to delivering sustainable development within the context of North Northamptonshire (the Local Plan area). This is a theme that runs throughout the Joint Core Strategy and reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It is considered that this theme runs throughout the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan, and this is demonstrated in the Basic Condition Statement. It is therefore considered to be in conformity with Policy 1 of the Joint Core Strategy.

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011 - 2031	Explanation of Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Conformity with the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy
GU1: Landscape Character and Locally Important Views	Policy 3	Development should be located and designed in a way that is sensitive to its landscape setting and where possible enhance its distinctive qualities.
GU2: Access to the Countryside	Policies 15 & 19	Supports improvements to green infrastructure corridors, improving connectivity and access between settlements and their surrounding countryside.
GU3: Dark Night Skies	Policy 3	Development should be located and designed in a way that is sensitive to its landscape setting and where possible enhance its distinctive qualities. Seek to preserve the tranquillity of the area.
GU4: Renewable Energy	Policy 26	Proposals for renewable energy development will be supported where it avoids adverse impact on heritage assets and the landscape, cumulative harm and agricultural land. These installations will be removed from site once redundant and land restored to its previous use.
GU5: Local Green Spaces	Policies 3 & 8	The Neighbourhood Plan has identified these Local Green Spaces for their informal recreation, and amenity value,

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011 - 2031	Explanation of Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Conformity with the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy
		based on local evidence. Their designation protects Grafton Underwood's unique and distinctive character.
GU6: Ecology and Biodiversity	Policy 4	Seeks to protect the network of local ecological features and habitats. Seeks to protect these features and ensure new development does not harm these features. New development should conserve and enhance these features. Seeks a net gain in biodiversity.
GU7: Ancient Woodland	Policy 19 and Policy 21	Supports the landscape character of the Rockingham Forest and seeks to preserve ancient woodland.
GU8: Trees and Hedgerows	Policy 3	Provides for landscape mitigation and seeks the retention of existing landscape features such as trees and hedgerows.
GU9: Local Heritage Assets	Policy 2	Supports the conservation and enhancement of the area's heritage assets.
GU10: Design	Policy 8	Requires new development to be of a high-quality design and to reflect and protect the rural and distinctive character of Grafton Underwood.
GU11: Retention of Services and Facilities	Policy 7	Supports the safeguarding of services and facilities in Grafton Underwood. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the facilities to be safeguarded.
GU12: Housing Mix	Policy 30	Provides for a mix of housing to cater for current and future needs.
GU13: Rural Housing	Policy 11	Supports the distribution of housing in accordance with the

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011 - 2031	Explanation of Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Conformity with the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy
		Spatial Strategy and development in rural areas, where there is a need and supports the rural economy.
GU14: Rural Worker Accommodation	Policy 11 and Policy 29	Supports the distribution of housing in accordance with the Spatial Strategy and development in rural areas.
GU15: Business Conversion of Rural Buildings	Policy 25	Supports rural diversification and the appropriate re-use of rural buildings.
GU16: Working from Home	Policy 25	Supports the sustainable development of the rural economy.
GU17: Former Grafton Underwood Airfield	Policies 2, 22 & 25	Supports sustainable tourism and improvements to the rural economy, whilst preserving heritage assets.
GU18: Timber Yard, Former Grafton Underwood Airfield	Policy 25	Supports the sustainable development of the rural economy.
GU19 : Parking	Policy 8	Seeks satisfactory parking provision.

Kettering Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan (2021)

- 4.5 The Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan is considered to conform to the following strategic policies of the Kettering Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan. The table below provides a further explanation of the conformity.

Policy LOC1:	Settlement Boundaries
Policy EMP4:	Live Work Units
Policy HWC2:	Protection of Community Facilities and Proposals for New Facilities
Policy NEH2:	Borough Level Green Infrastructure Network
Policy NEH3:	Historically and Visually Important Local Green Space
Policy RS2:	Category B Villages
Policy RS4:	Development in the Open Countryside
Policy RS5:	General Development Principles in the Rural Area
Policy GRA1:	Grafton Underwood Development Principles

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Kettering Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan	Explanation of Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Conformity with the Kettering Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan
GU1: Landscape Character and Locally Important Views	Policies LOC1, Rs5 and GRA1	Maintain views to the open countryside. Retains views of the church. Maintains the setting of the village and the beauty of the countryside.
GU2: Access to the Countryside	Policy NEH2	Supports extension and links to the Greenway, focusing on walking and cycling. Supports the green infrastructure network and its accessibility to users.
GU3: Dark Night Skies	Not applicable	Not applicable.
GU4: Renewable Energy	Policy RS4	Supports appropriate renewable energy development in the open countryside.
GU5: Local Green Spaces	Policies NEH3 and GRA1	Protects important open space in the village of Grafton Underwood. They are afforded the same safeguards as designated Green Belt land.
GU6: Ecology and Biodiversity	Not applicable	Not applicable

Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Policy	Kettering Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan	Explanation of Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan Conformity with the Kettering Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan
GU7: Ancient Woodland	Not applicable	Not applicable
GU8: Trees and Hedges	Not applicable	Not applicable
GU9: Local Heritage Assets	Policies GRA1 and RS2	Protects historic walls and the character and setting of the village.
GU10: Design	Policies RS2, RS5 and GRA1	Seeks design that is sympathetic to size, form, character and setting of Grafton Underwood.
GU11: Retention of Services and Facilities	HWC2	Prevents the loss of community facilities.
GU12: Housing Mix	Not applicable	Not applicable
GU13: Rural Housing	Policy RS4	Supports limited housing in the countryside including the re-use of rural buildings and the replacement of dwellings, subject to criteria.
GU14: Rural Worker Accommodation	Not applicable	Not applicable
GU15: Business Conversion of Rural Buildings	Policy RS4	Supports the rural economy and its rural diversification.
GU16: Working from Home	Policy EMP4	Facilities opportunities to work from home.
GU17: Former Grafton Underwood Airfield	Not applicable	Not applicable
GU18: Timber Yard, Former Grafton Underwood Airfield	Policy RS4	Supports the rural economy and its rural diversification.
GU19: Parking	Policy RS5	Seeks to ensure on-street parking does not dominate the area.

5. Compliance with European Union obligations

5.1 A neighbourhood plan or Order must be compatible with European Union obligations, as incorporated into UK law, in order to be legally compliant. There are three directives that may be of particular relevance to neighbourhood plans:

- Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (often referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive). This seeks to provide a high level of protection of the environment by integrating environmental considerations into the process of preparing plans and programmes.
- Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (often referred to as the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives respectively). These aim to protect and improve Europe's most important habitats and species.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

5.2 A Strategic Environmental Screening Statement for the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan (December 2024) has been used to determine whether or not the contents of the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plan and Programmes Regulations 2004. Neighbourhood Plans only require a SEA where they are likely to lead to significant effects. The Screening Report provides a screening opinion as to whether the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to significant environmental effects. This statement includes a commentary on whether these effects are likely to be significant.

5.3 The environmental assessment consultation bodies (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) have been consulted on this Screening Report and their responses are summarised below:

- Historic England –For the purposes of consultation on SEA Screening Opinions, Historic England confines its advice to the question, “Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment?” in respect of our area of concern, cultural heritage. On the basis of the information supplied and in the context of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations [Annex II of the SEA Directive], Historic England concurs with your view that the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required. The views of the other statutory consultation bodies should be taken into account before the overall decision on the need for a SEA is made.

- Natural England – Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:

- significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,
- significant effects on Habitats sites¹, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

- Environment Agency –We aim to reduce flood risk, while protecting and enhancing the water environment. Our comments on this matter are therefore made solely from these points of view. Having looked at the documentation, and noting the conclusions in it, from the point of view of the topics outlined above that the Environment Agency is commenting on, we agree with the conclusions that neither a SEA nor an HRA is needed.

- 5.4 The outcome of this assessment concludes that environmental effects have the potential to take place as a result of the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan, including in relation to the majority of the SEA 'topics'. This SEA screening opinion provides the necessary analysis relating to the potential for negative effects on 'Sensitive Areas' and other key environmental assets, including nearby SPAs, SSSIs, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Gardens, Conservation Area and Listed Buildings. With respect to these designations, it is considered that these are unlikely to be significant in the context of the SEA Directive. The significance of potential effects will be limited by the key aims of the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan and these are in turn reflected by the policy approaches proposed by the latest version of the plan.

- 5.5 It is therefore concluded that the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan is not subject to the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC, the 'SEA Directive' and accompanying regulations

Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report

- 5.6 A Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report (December 2024) was also undertaken for the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan. This report assessed, as far as practical, whether there are likely to be any significant effects on the qualifying features of European Designated Sites within or relatively proximate to the approved Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 5.7 The environmental assessment consultation bodies (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) have been consulted on this Screening Report and their responses are summarised below:
- Historic England – Historic England does not disagree with your conclusions but would defer to the opinions of the other statutory consultees.
 - Natural England – Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development. It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that, significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely and significant effects on Habitat Sites, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.
 - Environment Agency - We aim to reduce flood risk, while protecting and enhancing the water environment. Our comments on this matter are therefore made solely from these points of view. From the point of view of these topics outlined, we agree with the conclusions the neither a SEA nor an HRA is needed.
- 5.8 The Report concludes that given the distance between the Neighbourhood Area and the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA, the plan does not include policies that allocate land for development, and the likely scale of future development, a full Habitats Regulations Assessment is not required, as the plan is considered unlikely to have significant adverse effects on the Natura 2000 network of protected sites.
- 5.9 Other European directives, such as the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC), Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC) or the Water

Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) do not apply to the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan.

6. Other basic conditions

- 6.1 Regulations 32 and 33 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) prescribe 2 basic conditions in addition to those set out in the primary legislation. These are:
- the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, which set out the habitat regulation assessment process for land use plans, including consideration of the effect on habitats sites;
 - having regard to all material considerations, it is appropriate that the Neighbourhood Development Order is made (see Schedule 3 to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), where the development described in an order proposal is Environmental Impact Assessment development.
- 6.2 As set out in above, it is considered that the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan will not affect any Natura 2000 sites in line with the findings of the Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report undertaken of the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) 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.
- 7.2 Under the Act a document like a Neighbourhood Plan must be assessed through an Equalities Impact Assessment before it can be adopted or implemented. The Equalities Impact Assessment of the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan (Appendix 1) has found no negative impacts on any protected characteristic by reference to data or evidence. As a result, no recommendations are made and the assessment finds the Neighbourhood Development Plan to be appropriate and that the duty prescribed by the Equalities Act 2010 is met.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The Basic Conditions as set out in Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Regulation 32 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) are met by the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan and all the policies therein. It is therefore respectfully suggested to the Examiner that the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan complies with paragraph 11 of Schedule A2 to the Town and Country Planning Act 2004.

Appendix 1: Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan – Equalities Impact Assessment

Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) places a duty of care on public bodies to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity for specified equality groups. Under the Act a document like a Neighbourhood Plan must be assessed through an Equalities Impact Assessment before it can be adopted or implemented. The Assessment must address the 'protected characteristics' identified within the Act:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment is to help understand and ultimately protect the groups identified above from any adverse impact. This Assessment considers the needs of these particular groups and how they might be affected by the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan.

Methodology

The assessment considers whether the Plan has a positive, negative or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics (in so far as data is available) by reference to the Key Issues and Policies of the Plan. Where an adverse impact is identified the Assessment considers whether that impact is high, medium or low.

High impact: a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

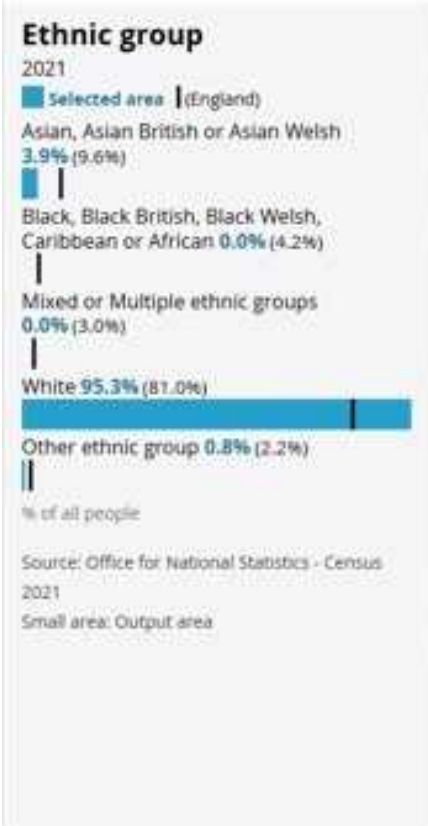
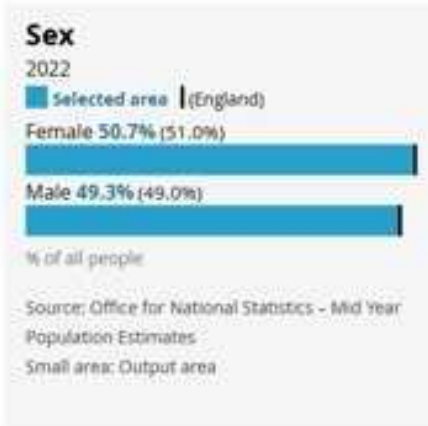
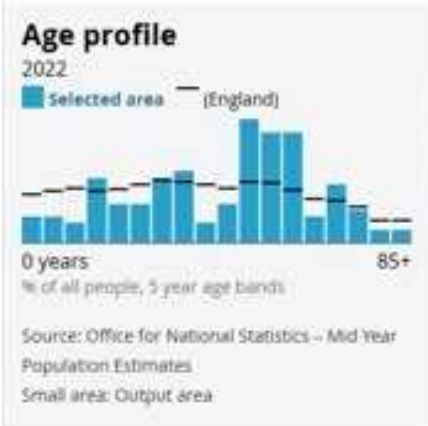
Medium impact: some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence.

Low impact: almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation-led.

Baseline Data

This Assessment has relied on Census data for 2021 published by the Office for National Statistics. For certain geographies, data is available for age, disability, gender identity, race, religious belief, sex and sexual orientation. There is no known data for pregnancy and maternity. Not all Census 2021 topics are available for all geographies. (Note: The data and

boundaries displayed in the profile below are aggregated from small areas on a best to fit basis, and therefore may differ slightly from other sources).





Summary

The proportion of Male/Females is comparable to the national picture.

The proportion of older people in the Neighbourhood Area is significantly higher than the national picture, and the proportion of 0-15 year olds is lower.

The proportion of people in the Neighbourhood Area who are Disabled under the Equality Act is lower than the average for England and Wales. Whereas those who consider themselves to be in very good health (48.5%) is the same as the national picture (48.5%)

The proportion of ethnic minorities is noticeably lower than the national picture.

The proportion of Christians in the Neighbourhood Area (44.6%) is slightly lower than England and Wales (46.3%) whilst the proportion of other religions is markedly lower.

Key Issues and Policies of the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following Vision for Grafton Underwood, comprising nine broad objectives.



The Neighbourhood Plan contains a suite of 19 policies to deliver against that vision and respond to the issues and objectives.

Impact of Policies on Groups with Protected Characteristics

Age

Policy GU2 seeks the protection of Rights of Way and create new links to the network including footpaths and cycleways, providing recreational value which is likely to benefit the younger generation. Although this could provide benefit to all sectors of the population.

Policy GU12 requires new developments to deliver a mix of housing, including smaller dwellings, and demonstrate how their proposals will meet the housing needs of older households.

Policy GU11 seeks the retention of a number of community services and facilities. This policy is seen as important for the long-term sustainability of Grafton Underwood. In addition, with an increasing proportion of older people in the population, access to locally based services will become increasingly important, reflecting lower mobility levels. Their retention is considered to have a strong benefit for young and old alike and is considered to have a positive impact.

Disability

In requiring new developments to provide for a mix of homes to reflect local need (GU12) there is a possibility that homes could be sought to the benefit of people with disabilities. However, the lack of evidence to include a specific requirement by reference to type of disability prevents a recommendation by this assessment for modification to the policy and leads to a conclusion that Policy GU12 perhaps has only the potential for a neutral impact. There is no evidence, however, that would suggest a negative impact.

Policy GU11 seeks the retention of community services and facilities. This policy is seen as important for the long-term sustainability of the Neighbourhood Area and provide access to locally based services for those with lower mobility levels.

Policy GU2 seeks the creation of footpath links. This has the potential for a positive impact on this characteristic although the degree will be dependent on the nature and definition of individual disabilities.

Policy GU16 facilitates home working which could potentially have a positive impact on those with less mobility.

Gender reassignment

The potential to secure high quality design under Policy GU10, that creates places that work well for both occupants and users, may benefit the public

realm and the opportunity for all the community to enjoy their built environment. Any improvement in sense of place and civic pride is generally believed to lead to positive places where people are better able to express themselves without fear of recrimination or hate crime. As a result, there is potential for a positive impact on this protected characteristic. However, due to the limited data related to this characteristic and the potential for tangible impacts being unknown this assessment concludes the impact to be neutral.

Marriage and civil partnership

This assessment found no impacts on this protected characteristic.

Pregnancy and maternity

There are potential benefits for this protected characteristic from the retention of key services such as the village hall (Policy GU11). These impacts might be positive but the lack of data for this characteristic and any tangible evidence suggests that the impact should be considered neutral.

Race

This assessment found no impacts on this protected characteristic.

Religion or belief

There is a potential benefit for this protected characteristic from the protection of key services and facilities, including the village hall and church (GA13) with potential for multi-use facilities. However, the uncertain prospects for demand and delivery draw the same conclusion that there is only a neutral impact although the potential for positive impacts should again be noted.

Sex

This assessment found no impacts on this protected characteristic.

Sexual orientation

The potential to secure high quality design under Policy GU10, that creates places that work well for both occupants and users, may benefit the public realm and the opportunity for all the community to enjoy their built environment. Any improvement in sense of place and civic pride is generally believed to lead to positive places where people are better able to express themselves without fear of recrimination or hate crime. As a result, there is potential for a positive impact on this protected characteristic. However, due to the limited data related to this characteristic and the potential for tangible impacts being unknown this assessment concludes the impact to be neutral.

Conclusion

The Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan provides a suite of policies to respond to the vision for the benefit of the local community including

protected characteristics but perhaps most particularly older people, young people, mothers to be and those with young children, disabled people and those with limited mobility.

The Neighbourhood Plan does not explicitly address the needs of religious groups, or transgender, gay or lesbian groups, or inequalities of sex. However, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks a range of housing types and seeks retention of and improvements in facilities and services which will benefit these groups equally. There is also the potential to provide a higher quality public realm where people with protected characteristics will be less liable to be subject to hate crime.

In conclusion, this assessment has found no negative impacts on any protected characteristic by reference to data or evidence. As a result, no recommendations are made, and the assessment finds the Grafton Underwood Neighbourhood Plan to be appropriate and that the duty of care prescribed by the Equalities Act 2010 is met.