

# **Sutton cum Lound Neighbourhood Development Plan Review 2024-2038**

**A report to Bassetlaw District Council on the Review  
of the Sutton cum Lound Neighbourhood  
Development Plan**

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## **Executive Summary**

- 1 I was appointed by Bassetlaw District Council in December 2025 to carry out the independent examination of the review of the Sutton cum Lound Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2 The examination was undertaken by written representations. I visited the neighbourhood area on 10 December 2025.
- 3 The Plan includes a variety of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. It has a focus on safeguarding its built and natural environment, designating a package of Local Green Spaces, and achieving well-designed places.
- 4 The Plan has been underpinned by community support and engagement. All sections of the community have been engaged in its preparation.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report, I have concluded that the Sutton cum Lound Neighbourhood Plan Review meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.
- 6 I recommend that the referendum should coincide with the neighbourhood area.

**Andrew Ashcroft**  
**Independent Examiner**  
**16 February 2026**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Sutton cum Lound Neighbourhood Development Plan Review 2024-2038 (the Plan).
- 1.2 The Plan has been submitted to Bassetlaw District Council (BDC) by Sutton cum Lund Parish Council (ScLPC) in its capacity as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They aim to allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023 and 2024. The NPPF continues to be the principal element of national planning policy.
- 1.4 The role of an independent examiner is clearly defined in the legislation. I have been appointed to examine whether the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions and Convention Rights and other statutory requirements. It is not within my remit to examine or to propose an alternative plan, or a potentially more sustainable plan except where this arises because of my recommended modifications to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions and the other relevant requirements.
- 1.5 A neighbourhood plan can be narrow or broad in scope. It can include whatever range of policies it sees as appropriate to its designated neighbourhood area. In this case, the Plan is a review of the 'made' Plan. It has been designed to be distinctive in general terms, and to be complementary to the development plan. The Plan has a focus on safeguarding its built and natural environment, designating a package of Local Green Spaces, and achieving well-designed places.
- 1.6 Within the context set out above, this report assesses whether the Plan is legally compliant and meets the basic conditions that apply to neighbourhood plans. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends changes to its policies and supporting text.
- 1.7 This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome the Plan would then form a part of the wider development plan and be used to determine planning applications in the neighbourhood area.

## 2 The Role of the Independent Examiner

- 2.1 The examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted neighbourhood plan meets the relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 2.2 I was appointed by BDC, with the consent of ScLPC, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of both the BDC and ScLPC. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.
- 2.3 I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I am a Director of Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited. In previous roles, I have 43 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level and more recently as an independent examiner. I have significant experience of undertaking neighbourhood plan examinations and health checks. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral System.

### *Examination Outcomes*

- 2.4 There are a variety of ways in which a review of a neighbourhood plan can be examined. They are described in Section 3 of this report. In this case, I have concluded that the Plan needs both examination and a referendum.
- 2.5 In this context, as the independent examiner I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the examination:
- (a) that the Plan as submitted should proceed to a referendum; or
  - (b) that the Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
  - (c) that the Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

### *Other examination matters*

- 2.6 In examining the Plan I am also required to check whether:
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area; and
  - the Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one neighbourhood area); and
  - the Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.
- 2.7 Having addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.6 of this report I am satisfied that each of the points have been met subject to the contents of this report.

### 3 Procedural Matters

3.1 In undertaking this examination I have considered the following documents:

- the submitted Plan
- the Basic Conditions Statement.
- the Consultation Statement.
- the Design Guidance and Codes.
- the Housing Needs Assessment.
- the Statement of the Extent and Nature of the Review.
- the BDC SEA/HRA Screening report.
- the representations made to the Plan.
- ScLPC's responses to the clarification note.
- the adopted Bassetlaw Local Plan (2020 to 2038).
- the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).
- Planning Practice Guidance.
- relevant Ministerial Statements.

3.2 The various documents are helpfully available on the BDC's website. Wherever possible, I will refer to the document concerned for the purposes of keeping this report as concise as possible.

3.3 I visited the neighbourhood area on 10 December 2025. I looked at its overall character and appearance and at those areas affected by policies in the Plan in particular. The visit is covered in more detail in Section 5 of this report.

#### *The examination process for the review of a neighbourhood plan*

3.4 The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 identifies the circumstances that might arise as and when qualifying bodies seek to review 'made' neighbourhood plans and introduces a proportionate process to do so based on the changes proposed.

3.5 There are three types of modification which can be made to a neighbourhood plan or order. The process will depend on the degree of change which the modification involves and as follows:

- minor (non-material) modifications to a neighbourhood plan or order which would not materially affect the policies in the plan or permission granted by the order. These may include correcting errors, such as a reference to a supporting document, and would not require examination or a referendum; or
- material modifications which do not change the nature of the plan or order and which would require examination but not a referendum. This might, for example, entail the addition of a design code that builds on a pre-existing design policy, or the addition of a site or sites which, subject to the decision of the independent examiner, are not so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan; or

- material modifications which do change the nature of the plan or order would require examination and a referendum. This might, for example, involve allocating significant new sites for development.
- 3.6 The statement produced by ScLPC comments that the modifications to the policies constitute a material amendment to the Plan which require examination and a referendum.
- 3.7 I have considered the Modifications Statement very carefully. I agree with ScLPC that the changes proposed to the Plan are so substantial and significant to change to the nature of the Plan and require both an examination and a referendum. This report has been prepared accordingly.
- 3.8 It is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations made to the submitted Plan, I was satisfied that the Plan could be examined without the need for a public hearing.

## 4 Consultation

### *Consultation Process*

- 4.1 Policies in made neighbourhood plans become the basis for local planning and development control decisions. As such the regulations require neighbourhood plans to be supported and underpinned by public consultation.
- 4.2 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, ScLPC has prepared a Consultation Statement. The Statement is proportionate to the neighbourhood area and the review of the policies in the made Plan. It reflects the specific circumstances that have generated the community's desire to review the Plan.
- 4.3 The Statement sets out the various activities that were held to engage the local community during the initial stages of the plan-preparation process. They also provide details about the consultation process that took place on the pre-submission version of the Plan (June to July 2025).
- 4.4 ScLPC has built on the success of the consultation process associated with the made Plan.
- 4.5 The Statement sets out how ScLPC engaged with the community as part of the publication of the pre-submission Plan. A key element of the Statement is the way in which it comments about how submitted Plan took account of consultation feedback at the pre-submission phase. This helps to explain the way in which the Plan has evolved.

### *Consultation Feedback*

- 4.6 Consultation on the Plan was undertaken by BDC and ended on 1 December 2025. This generated representations from the following organisations:
- Bassetlaw District Council
  - Coal Authority
  - Environment Agency
  - Hawksley Farms
  - Historic England
  - National Highways
  - Natural England
  - Nottinghamshire County Council
- 4.7 I have taken all the comments into account in preparing this report. Where appropriate, I refer to specific representations in my commentary on the various policies in the Plan.

## 5 The Neighbourhood Area and the Development Plan Context

### *The Neighbourhood Area*

- 5.1 The neighbourhood area is the parish of Sutton cum Lound. It is located 3 miles north of Retford and extends to 789 hectares. It has a population of approximately 750 persons living in 383 dwellings. It was designated as a neighbourhood area on 28 June 2015.
- 5.2 Sutton was historically an agricultural settlement and farmland still surrounds the village on all sides. This rural setting remains a key part of Sutton cum Lound's character. Having steadily expanded over many years, the village now features a mixture of housing types and styles from several time periods. This has led to a variety of character, density, and built form across the village. Outside the village most of the Parish is made up of open countryside.
- 5.3 There are two small industrial areas at Daneshill and off the A638 near the Idle Valley that are for cement production and storage.

### *Development Plan Context*

- 5.4 The development plan covering the neighbourhood plan area is the Bassetlaw District Local Plan (2020 to 2038). It sets out a vision, objectives, a spatial strategy, and overarching planning policies that guide new development in the Plan period. The Local Plan was adopted in May 2024.
- 5.5 Sutton cum Lound is identified as one of a series of Small Rural Settlements in the Local Plan. Policy ST2 comments that such settlements will experience residential growth over the plan period to support their role and function through the following minimum housing requirements for each individual settlement. The policy establishes a minimum housing requirements for each individual settlement. In the case of Sutton cum Lound it is 17 homes.
- 5.6 The Local Plan includes a series of other policies which will affect the neighbourhood area as follows:
- Policy ST27 Affordable Housing;
  - Policy ST28 Housing Mix;
  - Policy ST30 Sites for Gypsies and Travellers;
  - Policy ST33 Design Quality;
  - Policy ST35 Landscape Character;
  - Policy ST37 Green and Blue Infrastructure;
  - Policy ST39 Trees, Woodland, and Hedgerows;
  - Policy ST40 The Historic Environment;
  - Policy 46 Protecting Amenity; and
  - Policy ST48 Reducing Carbon Emissions, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.

- 5.7 The submitted Plan has been prepared within its wider adopted development plan context. In doing so it has relied on up-to-date information and research that has underpinned existing planning policy documents in the District. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter.

*Visit to the Neighbourhood Area*

- 5.8 I visited the neighbourhood area on 10 December 2025. I approached it from Barnby Moor and the A1 from the west. This helped me to understand its connection to the strategic road network and its setting in the wider countryside.
- 5.9 I looked initially at the historic core of the village based around St Bartholomew's Church. I also saw the significance of the various proposed Local Green Spaces in this part of the village.
- 5.10 I then looked at the proposed housing allocation to the south of Lound Low Road.
- 5.11 I then looked at the new houses in Knights Walk.
- 5.12 I then saw the school. Its importance to the community was very clear.
- 5.13 Throughout the visit, I looked at the other proposed Local Green Spaces, the Areas of Landscape Sensitivity and the Key Views.
- 5.14 I left the neighbourhood area and drove to Retford to the south. This part of the visit highlighted the relationship of the parish to Retford and its retail and commercial services.

## 6 The Neighbourhood Plan as a whole

6.1 This section of the report deals with the submitted neighbourhood plan as a whole and the extent to which it meets the basic conditions. The Basic Conditions Statement has helped considerably in the preparation of this section of the report. It is a well-presented and informative document. It is also proportionate to the Plan itself.

6.2 As part of this process I must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. To comply with the basic conditions, the Plan must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area;
- not breach, and otherwise be compatible with, the assimilated obligations of EU legislation (as consolidated in the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Consequential Amendment) Regulations 2023; and
- not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

6.3 I assess the Plan against the basic conditions under the following headings.

### *National Planning Policies and Guidance*

6.4 For the purposes of this examination the key elements of national policy relating to planning matters are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in December 2024.

6.5 The NPPF sets out a range of core land-use planning issues to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The following are particularly relevant to the Sutton cum Lound Neighbourhood Plan Review:

- a plan-led system – in this case the relationship between the neighbourhood plan and the adopted Bassetlaw Local Plan;
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- building a strong, competitive economy;
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving local communities;
- taking account of the different roles and characters of different areas;
- highlighting the importance of high-quality design and good standards of amenity for all future occupants of land and buildings; and
- conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

- 6.6 Neighbourhood plans sit within this wider context both generally, and within the more specific presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 13 of the NPPF indicates that neighbourhoods should both develop plans that support the strategic needs set out in local plans and plan positively to support local development that is outside the strategic elements of the development plan.
- 6.7 In addition to the NPPF, I have also taken account of other elements of national planning policy including Planning Practice Guidance and ministerial statements.
- 6.8 Having considered all the evidence and representations available as part of the examination I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to national planning policies and guidance in general terms. It sets out a positive vision for the future of the neighbourhood area. It has a focus on safeguarding its built and natural environment, designating a package of Local Green Spaces, and achieving well-designed places. The Basic Conditions Statement maps the policies in the Plan against the appropriate sections of the NPPF.
- 6.9 At a more practical level, the NPPF indicates that plans should provide a clear framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made and that they should give a clear indication of how a decision-maker should react to a development proposal (paragraph 16d). This is reinforced in Planning Practice Guidance. Paragraph ID:41-041-20140306 indicates that policies in neighbourhood plans should be drafted with sufficient clarity so that a decision-maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Policies should also be concise, precise, and supported by appropriate evidence.
- 6.10 As submitted, the Plan does not fully accord with this range of practical issues. Many of my recommended modifications in Section 7 relate to matters of clarity and precision. They are designed to ensure that the Plan fully accords with national policy.

*Contributing to sustainable development*

- 6.11 There are clear overlaps between national policy and the contribution that the submitted Plan makes to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development has three principal dimensions – economic, social, and environmental. The submitted Plan has set out to achieve sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. In the economic dimension, the Plan includes a policy for infill residential development (Policy 2). In the social dimension, it includes policies for local green spaces (Policy 5), community facilities (Policy 9), housing mix (Policy 10a) and affordable housing (Policy 10b). In the environmental dimension, the Plan positively seeks to protect its natural, built, and historic environment. It has specific policies on landscape character (Policy 3), biodiversity (Policy 4), design (Policy 7), and heritage assets (Policy 11). This assessment overlaps with ScLPC's comments on this matter in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

*General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan*

- 6.12 I have already commented in detail on the development plan context in Bassetlaw District in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 of this report.

- 6.13 I consider that the submitted Plan delivers a local dimension to this strategic context. It responds positively to the growth agenda in Policy ST2 of the Local Plan. Subject to the recommended modification in this report, I am satisfied that the submitted Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan.

#### *Strategic Environmental Assessment*

- 6.14 The Neighbourhood Plan (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 require a qualifying body either to submit an environmental report prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 or a statement of reasons why an environmental report is not required.
- 6.15 In order to comply with this requirement BDC published a screening report in September 2025 on the need or otherwise for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be prepared for the Plan. The report is thorough and well-constructed. It includes the responses from the consultation bodies. As a result of this process, it concluded that the Plan is not likely to have any significant effects on the environment and accordingly would not require SEA.

#### *Habitat Regulations*

- 6.16 BDC prepared a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Plan at the same time. It concludes that the submitted Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on protected sites. The report is very thorough and comprehensive. It assesses the impact of the Plan on the Birklands and Bilhaugh SAC. It concludes that the Plan will not give rise to likely significant effects on protected site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and Appropriate Assessment is not required.
- 6.17 Having reviewed the information provided to me as part of the examination I am satisfied that a proportionate process has been undertaken in accordance with the various regulations. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I am entirely satisfied that the submitted Plan is compatible with this aspect of neighbourhood plan regulations.

#### *Human Rights*

- 6.18 In a similar fashion I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and that it complies with the Human Rights Act. There is no evidence that has been submitted to me to suggest otherwise. In addition, there has been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to take part in the preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known. Based on all the evidence available to me, I conclude that the submitted Plan does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with the ECHR.

#### *Summary*

- 6.19 On the basis of my assessment of the Plan in this section of my report I am satisfied that it meets the basic conditions subject to the incorporation of the recommended modifications contained in this report.

## 7 The Neighbourhood Plan Policies

- 7.1 This section of the report comments on the policies in the Plan. It makes a series of recommended modifications to ensure that the various policies have the necessary precision to meet the basic conditions.
- 7.2 My recommendations focus on the policies themselves given that the basic conditions relate primarily to this aspect of neighbourhood plans. In some cases, I have also recommended changes to the associated supporting text.
- 7.3 I am satisfied that the content and the form of the Plan is fit for purpose. It is distinctive and proportionate to the neighbourhood area. The wider community and ScLPC have spent time and energy in identifying the issues and objectives that they wish to be included in the review of the 'made' Plan. The community has successfully marshalled the capacity to prepare the Plan to reflect changing circumstances including updated national planning policies and a recently-adopted Local Plan. This sits at the heart of the localism agenda.
- 7.4 The Plan has been designed to reflect Planning Practice Guidance (ID:41-004-20190509) which indicates that neighbourhood plans must address the development and use of land. Appendix A of the Plan includes a series of Community Aspirations.
- 7.5 I have addressed the policies in the order that they appear in the submitted Plan. Thereafter I comment on the Aspirations.
- 7.6 For clarity this section of the report comments on all the policies in the Plan.
- 7.7 Where modifications are recommended to policies they are highlighted in bold print. Any associated or free-standing changes to the text of the Plan are set out in italic print.

### *The initial sections of the Plan (Sections 1-6)*

- 7.8 The initial elements of the Plan set the scene for the policies. They are proportionate to the neighbourhood area and the subsequent policies. Section 1 identifies the neighbourhood area (Map 1) and specifies the Plan period (in paragraph 5). It also helpfully sets out the reasons for the review of the Plan and the wider role of a neighbourhood plan in the overall development plan.
- 7.9 Section 2 sets out the nature of the parish and its current circumstances. Parts of this section have underpinned some of the policies in the Plan.
- 7.10 Section 3 comments about the way in which the community was engaged as the Plan was being prepared. It overlaps with the submitted Consultation Statement.
- 7.11 Section 4 sets out a comprehensive vision for the Plan. It is very distinctive to the neighbourhood area and provide an overall context for the resulting policies. The Vision is as follows:

*‘Our vision is to maintain and encourage a prosperous community that balances growth with conservation, respects our heritage, and nurtures a deep connection to the land. Central to this vision is our desire to protect the character of Sutton cum Lound by maintaining its green spaces, open fields, and woodlands, which form the natural backdrop to village life and is one of the reasons Sutton cum Lound is an attractive place to live.*

*We will prioritise environmentally sensitive planning, ensuring that any development aligns with the village’s traditional aesthetics and respects the landscape character. Our neighbourhood plan will include strategies to safeguard local wildlife, promote biodiversity, and keep our residents safe.*

*While we cherish our rural roots, we also recognise the importance of adapting to the needs of a modern world. This will involve trying to improve digital connectivity, fostering small, independent enterprises, and encouraging public transport links, while ensuring that Sutton cum Lound remains a self-sufficient and resilient village, with access to amenities that serve the daily needs of our residents.*

*In the years to come, Sutton cum Lound will stand as a shining example of how a rural village can honour its past while embracing the future. Through careful stewardship of our natural surroundings, thoughtful development, and a commitment to shared values, we will ensure that Sutton cum Lound remains a place of beauty, harmony, and community— a village where the essence of rural life continues to flourish.’*

- 7.12 Section 5 comments about the nine objectives of the Plan. Section 6 comments about how developers should engage with the community.
- 7.13 The remainder of this section of the report addresses each policy in turn in the context set out in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.7 of this report.

Policy 1 Sustainable Development, and the Development Boundary

- 7.14 This policy has been comprehensively updated to reflect changes in the wider policy context.
- 7.15 The policy reconsiders and affirms the Development Boundary around and within the existing settlement, to provide a clear signal on the limits of future development. It advises that any additional development must be concentrated within the development boundary as shown on Map 3.
- 7.16 Hawksley Farms comments about the way in which the development boundary has been defined. In its response to the clarification note ScLPC commented that:

*‘The response misrepresents the status of the site in the made (Plan). Appendix D of the made (Plan) listed all the sites that had been considered. This site was numbered BDC09 and the site was a red. It was considered unsuitable for development and was not included in the list of site allocations in the made (Plan).*

*Policy 6 Infill and Redevelopment in Sutton cum Lound village in the made (Plan) provides more prescription and that any infill would in any event be limited to one or two dwellings unless it could be demonstrated to the district council’s satisfaction that*

*a higher number perhaps duty plot and dwelling size, would not cause material harm to the character of the area (see criteria d below).*

*The respondent suggests that development of this site would solve the speeding problem on Town Street. The NPG do not agree and believe it would only increase the likelihood of accidents from vehicles speeding along Town Street encountering vehicles turning in and out of the site. The planning issues were set out most recently in Appeal Ref App/A3010/W/19/3239309.'*

- 7.17 I note that the fifth part of the policy overlaps with Policy 9 of the Plan in relation to offering support for the development of a village shop,
- 7.18 In general terms the policy is well-considered and will focus new development within the defined Development Boundary. This will ensure that it will have ready access to the commercial and community facilities within the neighbourhood area. I recommend the following series of modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow BDC to implement its contents through the development management process:
- detailed changes to the wording used throughout the policy;
  - ensuring that the policy can be applied in a proportionate way;
  - ensuring that the policy operates in the plural; and
  - ensuring that the wording used reflects the development management process.
- 7.19 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

**Replace the first part of the policy with: 'As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should demonstrate how they make a positive contribution towards the achievement of sustainable development.'**

**In the second part of the policy replace 'if it is filling' with 'where they fill'**

**Replace the first sentence of the fourth part of the policy with: 'Development proposals should be designed to minimise the use of carbon in their construction and operation.'**

**In the fifth part of the policy replace 'is supported' with 'will be supported'**

Policy 2 Infill and Backland Development

- 7.20 This policy has been revised to include the contents of the Sutton cum Lound Design Guidance and Codes.
- 7.21 The policy comments that applications for high quality residential development on infill and backland development within the Development Boundary will be supported where the proposals meet a series of criteria
- 7.22 In general terms, the policy takes a positive approach towards infill development and has regard to Section 5 of the NPPF. I recommend that the wording used in the first part of the policy is modified so that it better relates to the development management process. I also recommend that the second part is recast so that it has a positive rather than a negative focus.

- 7.23 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

**In the first part of the policy replace ‘Applications’ with ‘Proposals’**

**Replace the second part of the policy with:**

**‘Infill proposals should respond sensitively to the living conditions of existing and future residents of the proposed development in terms of loss of privacy, daylight, or amenity of adjoining properties.’**

Policy 3 Protecting the Landscape Character

- 7.24 This policy has been updated to identify areas of landscape sensitivity, key views, and character-defining trees & hedges.
- 7.25 It is a wide-ranging policy and the supporting text is very detailed and locally-distinctive.
- 7.26 I looked at the landscape character of the neighbourhood area (and the key views) carefully during the visit. The work on the Areas of Landscape Sensitivity is helpfully underpinned by the Design Guidance and Codes.
- 7.27 In general this is a positive policy which responds well to the identified landscape character. In this broader context, I recommend the following modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow BDC to implement it through the development management process:
- the reworking of first part so that it more clearly explains its intended approach;
  - the reversal of the order of the second and third parts of the policy;
  - the modification of wording so that the policy is more appropriate to the role of a neighbourhood plan within the overall development plan;
  - the deletion of the seventh part of the policy which is already addressed by national and local policies and legislation; and
  - a recasting of the ninth part of the policy so that its purpose is clearer and acknowledges that its intentions may not always be practicable.
- 7.28 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

**Replace the first three parts of the policy with:**

**‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should demonstrate that their design has responded positively to Design Codes A3, C1 and C2.**

**Development proposals in the Areas of Landscape Sensitivity (Map 4b) should be designed to respect their characteristics and safeguard relevant Key Views (Maps 4c and 4d). This should be demonstrated through an objective Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) proportionate to the location, scale and type of development proposed.**

**Development proposals that adversely affect the undeveloped character of the Areas of Landscape Sensitivity or Key Views will not be supported.’**

**In the fourth part replace ‘must’ with ‘should’**

**Delete the seventh part of the policy.**

**Replace the ninth part of the policy with: ‘Development proposals that require mitigation planting and/or boundary treatment should include native species wherever it is practicable to do so.’**

Policy 4 Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity

- 7.29 This policy has been updated to reflect changes in the wider policy context. It results in a wide-ranging policy
- 7.30 In the round this is a very good local policy which complements the national approach towards biodiversity net gain. As such it has regard to Section 15 of the NPPF. I recommend that the order of the second and third parts of the policy is reversed. This will enhance the natural flow of the policy and enhance its positive approach.
- 7.31 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

**Reverse the order of the second and third parts of the policy**

Policy 5 Designation of Local Green Spaces

- 7.32 This is a new policy that proposes the designation of eleven Local Green Spaces.
- 7.33 The proposed designations are underpinned by the information and photographs in Table 2. I looked at the proposed Local Green Spaces carefully during the visit I saw the significance of LGS 1 (the Church Cemetery) and LGS2 (The Meadows) in the village.
- 7.34 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to this matter and has regard to Section 8 of the NPPF. I am also satisfied that the proposed LGSs meet the criteria in paragraphs 106 and 107 of the NPPF.
- 7.35 In this wider context I recommend that the final part of the policy is modified so that it takes the matter-of-fact approach as set out in paragraph 108 of the NPPF. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

**Replace the second part of the policy with: ‘Development proposals within Local Green Spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.’**

Policy 6 Reducing the Risk of Flooding

- 7.36 This policy is new and seeks to manage the risk of flooding.
- 7.37 The first part of the policy is general in nature and largely restates national policy on flooding and the location of new development. In this context I sought comment from ScLPC about the extent to which it is necessary, and could it be repositioned into the supporting text to consolidate the existing contents of paragraphs 109 to 111 of the Plan. In its response it commented that:

*‘Criteria 1 could be repositioned between para 109 and 111 but the NPG would prefer it to remain within the policy to ensure that the importance of following the sequential test and understanding local flood risk from the use of EA maps is understood.’*

- 7.38 I have considered this issue very carefully. National guidance is clear that a neighbourhood plan does not need to repeat or restate national or local planning policies. On this basis I recommend that the first part of the policy is deleted and repositioned into the supporting text. This will remind the development industry of its broader responsibilities on this matter. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

#### **Delete the first part of the policy**

*Combine paragraphs 109 and 110.*

*Replace paragraph 110 with ‘In accordance with national policy in Section 14 of the NPPF, development must follow a sequential approach to flood risk management using the most up to date flood risk maps. For development in flood zones 2 and 3 the exception test will be applied, where necessary, in accordance with table 2 of Planning Practice Guidance.’*

#### Policy 7 Achieving Well Designed Places

- 7.39 This policy has been updated to include greater detail on design guidance referring to the Sutton cum Lound Design Guidance and Codes.
- 7.40 This is a very good policy which is underpinned by the Design Guidance and Codes. In the round it is a very positive local response to Section 12 of the NPPF. I recommend that the third part of the policy is modified so that BDC can apply its details in a proportionate way. I also correct a typographical error in its wording.
- 7.41 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

#### **Replace part 3 of the policy with:**

**‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals along Station Road and Sutton Lane should incorporate landscaping schemes and front boundary treatments to enhance their sense of enclosure (C1).’**

#### Policy 8a Improving Walking and Cycling Routes

- 7.42 This policy has been updated and expanded to identify, protect, and enhance walking and cycling routes, and increase pedestrian and cycling safety.
- 7.43 The policy has two related parts. The first advises that where applicable, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they protect and where possible enhance existing Public Rights of Way and permissive routes. The second comments that opportunities to improve cycling linkages through the parish, connecting to a wider cycling network and Retford beyond is supported.

- 7.44 In general the policy takes a positive approach to these issues and has regard to Sections 8 and 9 of the NPPF.
- 7.45 In its response to the clarification note ScLPC advised that the second part of the policy is intend to support proposals that improve cycling linkages through the parish, connecting to a wider cycling network and Retford (and therefore relate to the commentary in paragraphs 139 and 140 of the Plan). I recommend that this part of the policy is modified to reflect this approach.
- 7.46 I also recommend that the wording in the first part of the policy is recast so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF and is consistent with other policies in the Plan. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

**In the first part of the policy replace ‘will be expected to’ with ‘should’**

**Replace the second part of the policy with: ‘Wherever practicable development proposals should take opportunities to improve cycling linkages through the parish, including works which would connect to a wider cycling network and Retford.’**

#### Policy 8b Traffic Speeding and Pedestrian Safety

- 7.47 As with Policy 8a, this policy has been updated and expanded to identify, protect, and enhance walking and cycling routes, and increase pedestrian and cycling safety.
- 7.48 The policy comments that proposals that slow traffic speeds and increase pedestrian and cycling safety in accordance with Design Code A1 along Town Street, Sutton Lane, Station Road, and Mattersey Road will be supported.
- 7.49 I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

#### Policy 9 Protecting and Enhancing Community Facilities and Services

- 7.50 This policy has been updated to identify four community facilities.
- 7.51 It is a wide-ranging scope which includes offering support for the development of additional community facilities, including a village shop.
- 7.52 I saw the importance of the identified community facilities during the visit. This is a very locally-distinctive policy which has regard to Section 8 of the NPPF.
- 7.53 I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

#### Policy 10a A Mix of Housing Types

- 7.54 This policy has been updated, including more specific context based on the Sutton cum Lound Housing Needs Assessment (HNA).
- 7.55 The policy advises that housing schemes are required to deliver a housing mix by 2038 that meets local housing need as identified by the Sutton Cum Lound Local HNA 2024 (which indicates that 95% of them should be either two or three bed homes). It also

offers support to proposals that are capable of meeting peoples' changing needs over their lifetimes.

7.56 In general terms the policy takes a positive and evidence-based approach to these matters and has regard to Sections 5 and 8 of the NPPF.

7.57 I sought ScLPC's views about the extent to which the wording in brackets at the end of the first part of the policy is necessary given that range of house sizes is already addressed in the supporting text (paragraph 169). In its response to the clarification note it advised that:

*'This wording is important because whilst the made NP supported smaller dwellings the planning applications that have been approved and mostly delivered are for 4 plus bed houses. The NPG wanted to make this requirement explicit in the policy.'*

7.58 I also sought advice about whether the second part of the policy could be repositioned into the supporting text as it explains a process to be followed if a development proposal does not comply with the first part rather than being a land use policy. In its response to the clarification note ScLPC advised that:

*'For the reason referred to above the NPG want to send a clear message to developers that based on the local analysis the vast majority of houses should be 2/3 bed and any departure will need justification and will not be the norm. The NPG are concerned that removing this from the policy box may dilute this message.'*

7.59 I have considered these issues very carefully. On the first point, the final element of the first part of the policy simply repeats information already included in the HNA itself and in the supporting text of the Plan. As such I recommend its deletion. I also recommend that the first and the second parts of the policy are combined to give clear advice to all concerned. This allows the proportionate element at the beginning of the second part of the policy (as submitted) to be applied throughout.

7.60 The third part of the policy takes a positive approach towards development proposals that would meet peoples' changing needs over their lifetimes. In this context I recommend the deletion of the unnecessary use of 'voluntarily' in that part of the policy.

7.61 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

#### **Replace the first and second parts of the policy with:**

**'As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, housing schemes should deliver a housing mix that meets local housing need as identified by the Sutton Cum Lound Local Housing Needs Assessment 2024. Development proposals that incorporate an alternative housing mix should be accompanied by information, based on an up-to-date robust housing needs survey, to justify their approach towards housing mix.'**

#### **In the third part of the policy delete 'voluntarily'**

Policy 10b Affordable Housing

7.62 As with Policy 10a, this policy has been updated, including more specific context based on the Sutton cum Lound HNA.

7.63 The policy has three related parts as follows:

- where applicable, the development of affordable housing will be supported in accordance with District policy;
- the mix of affordable housing products should meet identified local needs including social rent, affordable housing for rent and affordable home ownership tenures; and
- affordable housing schemes should be fully integrated with market housing and be consistent in the quality of design and provision of private and public spaces.

7.64 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach towards affordable housing and has regard to Sections 5 and 8 of the NPPF.

7.65 I recommend that the first part of the policy is recast so that it provides the clarity required by the NPPF. Otherwise, it meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

**Replace the first part of the policy with: ‘Where applicable, the development of affordable housing will be supported where it is in accordance with the District Council’s policy.’**

Policy 11 Protecting Heritage Assets

7.66 This policy has been revised to align with other updated policies.

7.67 This results in a wide-ranging policy that addresses both designated and non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs). The proposed NDHAs are listed in Appendix E and shown on Map 11a.

7.68 The policy comments extensively about designated heritage assets. In this context I sought advice from ScLPC about the extent to which the first, second and fourth parts bring any added value beyond national and local planning policies on designated heritage assets. In its response to the clarification note it commented that:

*The NPG wanted to ensure that the value of their heritage was fully appreciated and to ensure that planning decisions reflected this. Criteria 4 was added based on consultation at Reg 14 with NCCs archaeology officer. The NPG will be advised by the examiner whether they can be removed without weakening the local protection of heritage assets of all significance.*

7.69 I have considered this matter carefully. National guidance is clear that a neighbourhood plan does not need to repeat or restate national or local planning policies. In this context I am satisfied that there is already sufficient policy guidance available to BDC to safeguard the designated heritage assets in the parish. As such I recommend that the first and second parts of the policy are deleted. Nevertheless, I am satisfied that the helpful supporting text should remain in the Plan to provide a context to the parish and to remind the development industry of its responsibilities on this matter. In this context, I recommend that elements of the first and second parts of the policy as submitted are repositioned to the supporting text.

- 7.70 I also recommend that the fourth part of the policy is repositioned into the supporting text. This acknowledges that it outlines a process matter rather than being a land use policy.
- 7.71 Finally, I recommend that the fifth part of the policy is recast so that more closely has regard to paragraph 216 of the NPPF. In this broader context the focus of the policy shifts to one based on NDHAs. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

**Replace the policy with:**

**‘The effect of an application on the significance of the identified non-designated heritage assets listed in Appendix E and shown on Map 11a should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.’**

*At the end of the first sentence of paragraph 182 add: ‘These buildings should be appreciated and valued for their significant contribution to the distinctive character of Sutton cum Lound in accordance with the national approach towards listed buildings. Great weight shall be afforded to the preservation and enhancement of these assets. Any new development should either preserve or enhance the special interest and setting of listed buildings.’*

*At the end of paragraph 185 add: ‘Appropriate archaeological assessment shall be undertaken to inform a program of archaeological mitigation where necessary.’*

Policy 12 Land south of Lound Low Road

- 7.72 This policy has been revised to align with other updated policies
- 7.73 The Plan advises that the site was allocated in the previous neighbourhood plan. It has planning permission for nine dwellings but there has been no start on site at present. The Plan advises that there was good community support for the development of this site in 2017 but only for development fronting the road.
- 7.74 The policy includes a series of appropriate and locally-distinctive criteria. I am satisfied that it takes a positive approach to the ongoing development of this site, and has regard to Section 5 of the NPPF. I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the local delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Community Aspirations

- 7.75 Appendix A of the Plan includes a series of Community Aspirations which have arisen as the Plan was developed. They are a non-land use matter which cannot directly be addressed as planning policies. In accordance with national advice, it is included in a separate section of the Plan.

7.76 I am satisfied that the Aspirations are both appropriate and distinctive to the parish.

#### Monitoring and Review

7.77 Section 19 of the Plan addresses the way in the Plan will be monitored and reviewed. This is best practice.

#### Other Matters - General

7.78 This report has recommended a series of modifications both to the policies and to the supporting text in the submitted Plan. Where consequential changes to the text are required directly because of my recommended modification to the policy concerned, I have highlighted them in this report. However other changes to the general text may be required elsewhere in the Plan because of the recommended modifications to the policies. It will be appropriate for BDC and ScLPC to have the flexibility to make any necessary consequential changes to the general text. I recommend accordingly.

*Modification of general text (where necessary) to achieve consistency with the modified policies.*

#### Other Matters - Specific

7.79 BDC has made detailed comments on the Plan. They have been very helpful as part of the wider examination process. Where they relate directly to specific policies, I have considered them in my assessment on a policy-by-policy basis. BDC has also made a series of more general comments on the wording used in the Plan. They relate to the wording used and the way in which the Plan is organised. I recommend the following modifications to address these matters (using the BDC numbering system in the comments from its Neighbourhood Planning Team):

- Page 20/Green box/B7; and
- Map 4f.

## 8 Summary and Conclusions

### *Summary*

- 8.1 The Plan sets out a range of policies to guide and direct development proposals in the period up to 2038. It is distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community to safeguard the character of the neighbourhood area and to designate Local Green Spaces. In the round, it is a good example of a review of a neighbourhood plan.
- 8.2 Following the independent examination of the Plan, I have concluded that the submitted Sutton cum Lound Neighbourhood Development Plan Review meets the basic conditions for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan subject to a series of recommended modifications.

### *Conclusion*

- 8.3 Based on the findings in this report I recommend to Bassetlaw District Council that subject to the incorporation of the modifications set out in this report the Sutton cum Lound Neighbourhood Development Plan Review should proceed to referendum.

### *Referendum Area*

- 8.4 I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Plan area. In my view, the neighbourhood area is entirely appropriate for this purpose and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore recommend that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the neighbourhood area as originally approved by the District Council on 28 June 2015
- 8.5 I am grateful to everyone who has contributed to the examination. The Parish Council's responses to the clarification note were both helpful and timely.

**Andrew Ashcroft**  
**Independent Examiner**  
**16 February 2026**