

**Godmanchester Town Council**



# **Godmanchester Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2036**

**Post Examination 2017 FINAL**

## **How To Read This Document:**

In writing a Neighbourhood Plan there are number of formal things that we have to include in the Plan document: these are covered in Section 1.

There are also issues that you have told us you think we should be trying to achieve through creating new planning policies: these are covered in Section 3.

There are the additional items that are either the detailed background or are detailed lists of other policies that we needed to include: these are included in the Appendices, Sections 11 – 14.

Finally, there is the list of activities and good ideas you told us were important to think about doing. They are not ‘planning policies’ therefore are not in the main Plan but because you told us they were important we have listed them here so the Town Council can consider taking them forward: these are detailed in Section 9.

You may have time to read all the pages and we would thoroughly recommend this. If you only have time to read a small amount, then the blue text boxes are the most important – these contain the policies that we think would make Godmanchester an even better place and on which you will be asked to vote on when we get to the Neighbourhood Plan Referendum.

## **What Happens Next**

The independent Planning Examiner has now reviewed the Plan and advised as to whether the policies meet planning requirements. She has made recommendations that have now been included in the Plan. We are now ready to move towards a Neighbourhood Plan Referendum.

## **You Get To Vote**

Huntingdonshire District Council will organise a Neighbourhood Plan Referendum on our behalf. The date will be advertised once it is known. At the Referendum, all residents who are registered to vote will be asked to say if they support the Plan. If more than 50% of those who turn out support it, then it becomes a legal planning document once ratified or ‘made’ by the District Council. Subsequently it will be one of the documents used to determine all new planning applications in the Town.

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# 1 Introduction

## Purpose of the Plan

- 1.1** This document represents the Neighbourhood Plan for Godmanchester parish from 2017 to 2036. The Plan contains a vision for the future of Godmanchester and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision.
- 1.2** The principal purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within the town and provide direction to anyone wishing to submit a planning application for development within this area. The process of producing a plan has involved the community as widely as possible. The different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to Godmanchester, its residents, businesses and community groups.
- 1.3** Some of the Neighbourhood Plan policies are general and apply throughout the Plan area, whilst others are site or area-specific and apply only to the appropriate areas illustrated on the relevant map. Nevertheless, in considering proposals for development, the Town and District Council will apply all relevant policies of the Plan. It is therefore assumed that the Plan will be read as a whole, although some cross-referencing between Plan policies has been provided.
- 1.4** The process of producing the Neighbourhood Plan, and the feedback from engaging with residents, has identified a number of actions which have not been included in the policies sections. This is because these are not specifically related to land use matters and therefore sit outside the jurisdiction of a Neighbourhood Plan. These actions will be addressed by the Town Council outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process.



## Policy Context

- 1.5** The Godmanchester Neighbourhood Plan (GNP) is being prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 1.6** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It was published on 27 March 2012 and is now also supplemented by Planning Practice Guidance. The NPPF provides a framework which has been used to produce a locally distinctive Neighbourhood Plan which reflects the needs and aspirations of the community.
- 1.7** All new developments in Godmanchester have to be in accordance with the NPPF, the planning policies adopted by the local planning authority, Huntingdonshire

District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and, when adopted, this Neighbourhood Plan.

- 1.8** The policies in this Plan have been produced to be in general conformity with the Huntingdonshire Core Strategy 2009. In addition, the Plan has given due regard to the emerging Huntingdonshire Local Plan which, when adopted, will cover the period to 2036.

## **Developing the Plan**

- 1.9** Godmanchester Town Council set up a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group which comprises five Town Councillors, including a District Councillor and a County Councillor and a number of local volunteers. The Plan has been written using feedback from public consultations and the Neighbourhood Plan survey to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan accurately reflects the aspirations of the community.
- 1.10** The Godmanchester Neighbourhood Plan covers all Godmanchester parish. In preparing the Plan, there has been dialogue with the adjoining parishes as well as with Huntingdonshire District Council. An application for neighbourhood plan designation was approved by Huntingdon District Council in March 2015.



**1.11** The map in Figure 1 below shows the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area, which is the same as the administrative boundary of Godmanchester parish.

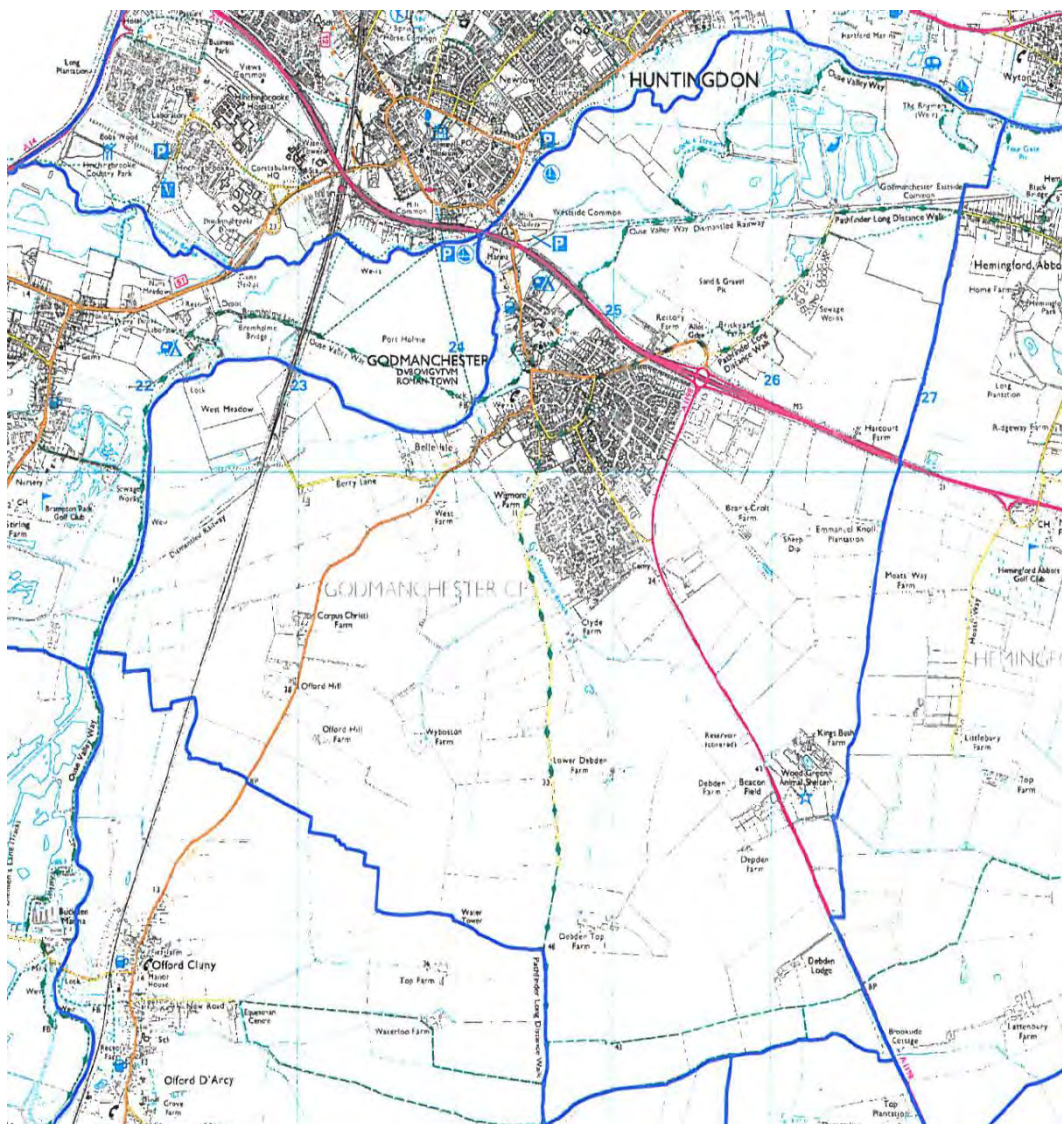


Figure 1: Godmanchester neighbourhood plan area/parish boundary

## Monitoring the Plan

**1.12** Godmanchester Town Council, as the 'Qualifying Body', will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery.

## Community Action Plan

**1.13** The consultation process identified a number of issues and potential projects that could not be addressed through the policies in this document. These are captured in Chapter 9 as a Community Action Plan. The Town Council will consider how these issues and ideas might be taken forward in partnership with other organisations.

## 2 Local Context

### History of Godmanchester

2 Godmanchester is a Borough Town, chartered initially by King John in 1212. Its Town status is important to residents but for all intents and purposes the settlement has more in common with a large village in terms of its feel, connections, community spirit and facilities.

2.1 Much of historic Godmanchester is built on top of a Roman Settlement: sections of the road, temples and houses have been found and numerous artefacts are unearthed each year by householders.

2.2 Later, the Danes occupied the area and changed the shape of the Town by creating the area of water by the Causeway as part of the establishment of an inland port. Norman

Godmanchester was a wealthy Royal Manor and became a thriving market town. All through the Middle Ages towards the end of the second millennium, the Town continued to benefit from its location on the London to York road. It served as a place to rest and change horses. The former proliferation of inns and taverns in the town is testament to this. The Great Ouse was also an important trade route and Godmanchester enjoyed the benefits of servicing river traffic.

2.3 In the last century or so, as rail then road became the primary mode of transport, Godmanchester remained and continues to be today a good focal point, being close to the East Coast main line and the A1, M11 and A14. Despite enjoying a rural (or at least semi-rural) location, Godmanchester remains close to major transport routes. In about 1909, the Wright brothers brought their flying machine to Britain and flew it at Portholme; the first manned flight outside of the US.

2.4 The Town's proximity to the once relatively quiet A604, now the A14 linking the north, the south and the east, has brought growth in neighbouring Huntingdon but traffic and noise to Godmanchester. Today we are in a fast-growing part of the country: there is increasing house building and business development. Our proximity to a number of major roads makes the Town an attractive location for developers wanting to build: the pressure to grow from a small rural Town to a large characterless urban sprawl is significant.





## Profile of the Community Today

- 2.5** Huntingdonshire is one of the fastest growing parts of the United Kingdom as well as within Cambridgeshire<sup>1</sup>. It is set to grow in terms of housing and businesses: a number of sites are already identified, including Alconbury Weald, Wyton and Wintringham Park. Whilst the infographics show that Godmanchester is currently fairly similar to the rest of Huntingdonshire in 2016, that is less likely to be the case as areas around us expand and become more populated between now and 2036.
- 2.6** Godmanchester is keen to retain its unique character of being a Town with the community feel of a large village. It will be important for us to retain the profiles set out below which characterise the Town.
- 2.7** The population of the Town has grown significantly since the 1990's, with a steep increase in numbers since 2010. In 2016 we have approximately 6800 residents. and Cambridgeshire County Council forecasts that we will have grown to 8600 residents by 2040<sup>2</sup>. That is a 26% increase that is predicted for Godmanchester.



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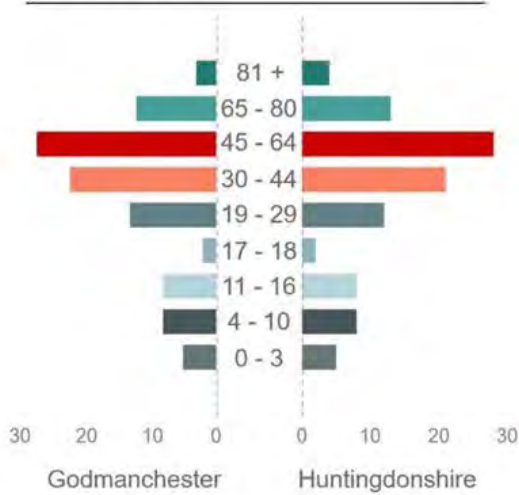
<sup>1</sup> Huntingdonshire District Council Marketing Strategy 2016

<sup>2</sup> Based on delivering all the sites in the HDC Draft Local Plan to 2036

Total Population

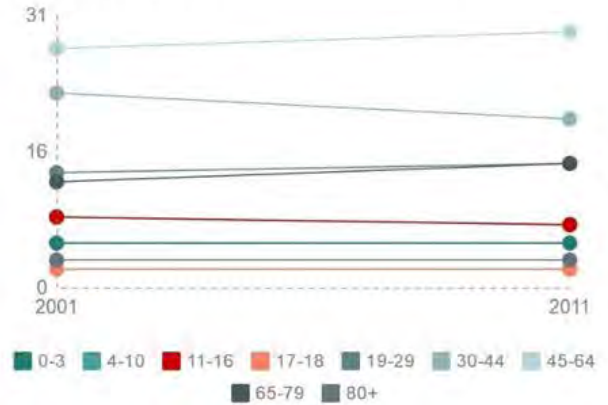
# 6,711

Age Profile (%)



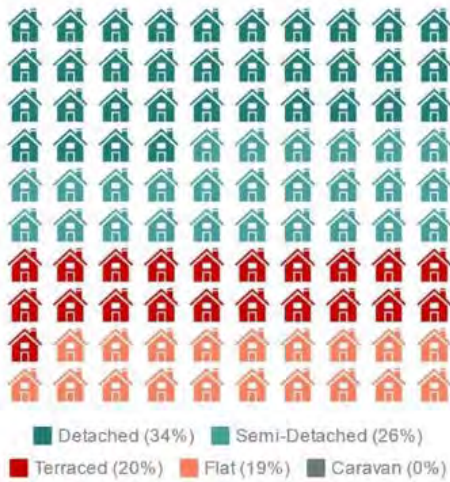
Age Profile Change 2001 - 2011 (%)

Godmanchester



Housing Type

Godmanchester



Huntingdonshire

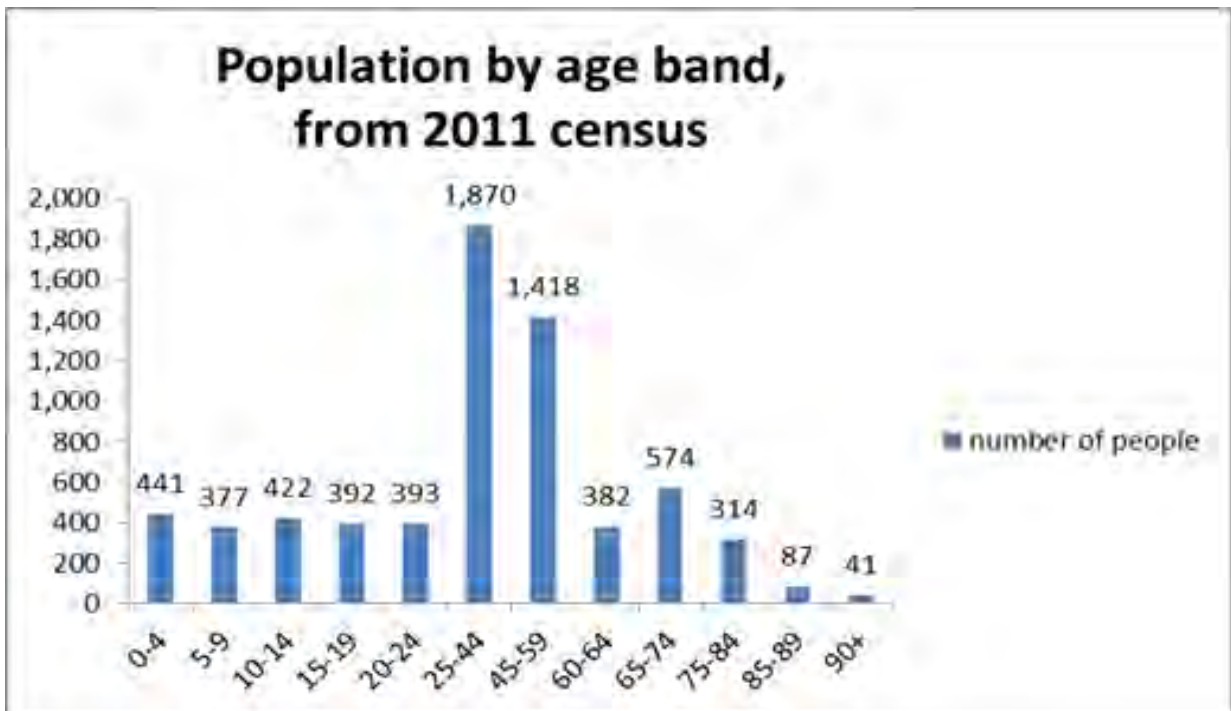


3

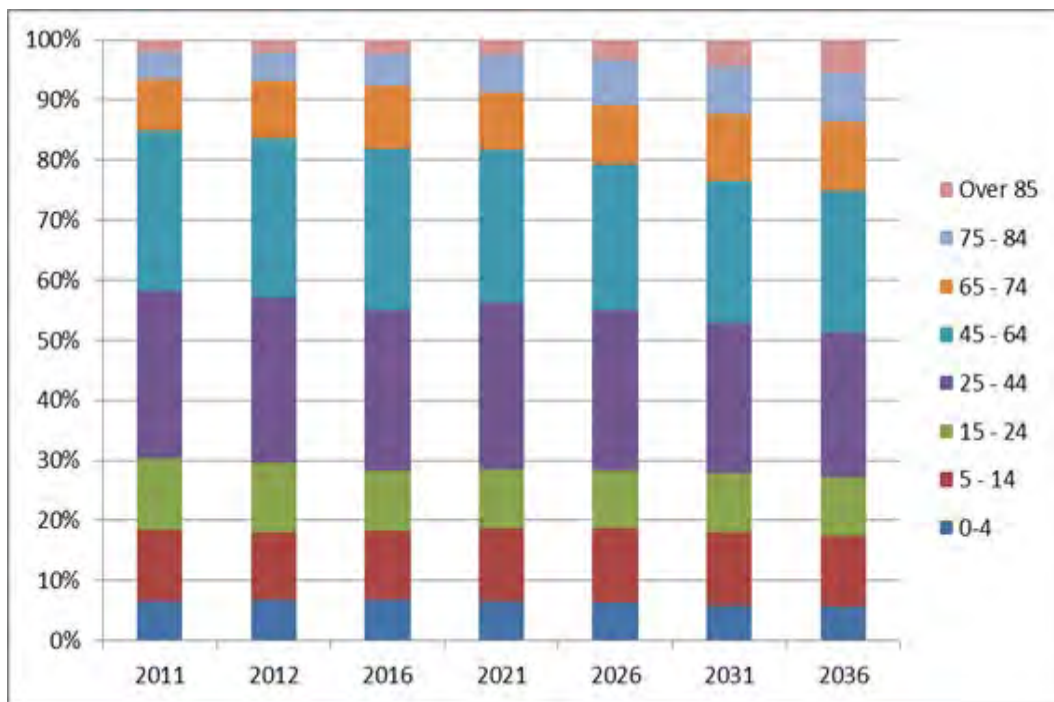
➤ Godmanchester has a similar population profile to Huntingdonshire district.

<sup>3</sup> All data comes from the 2011 Census.

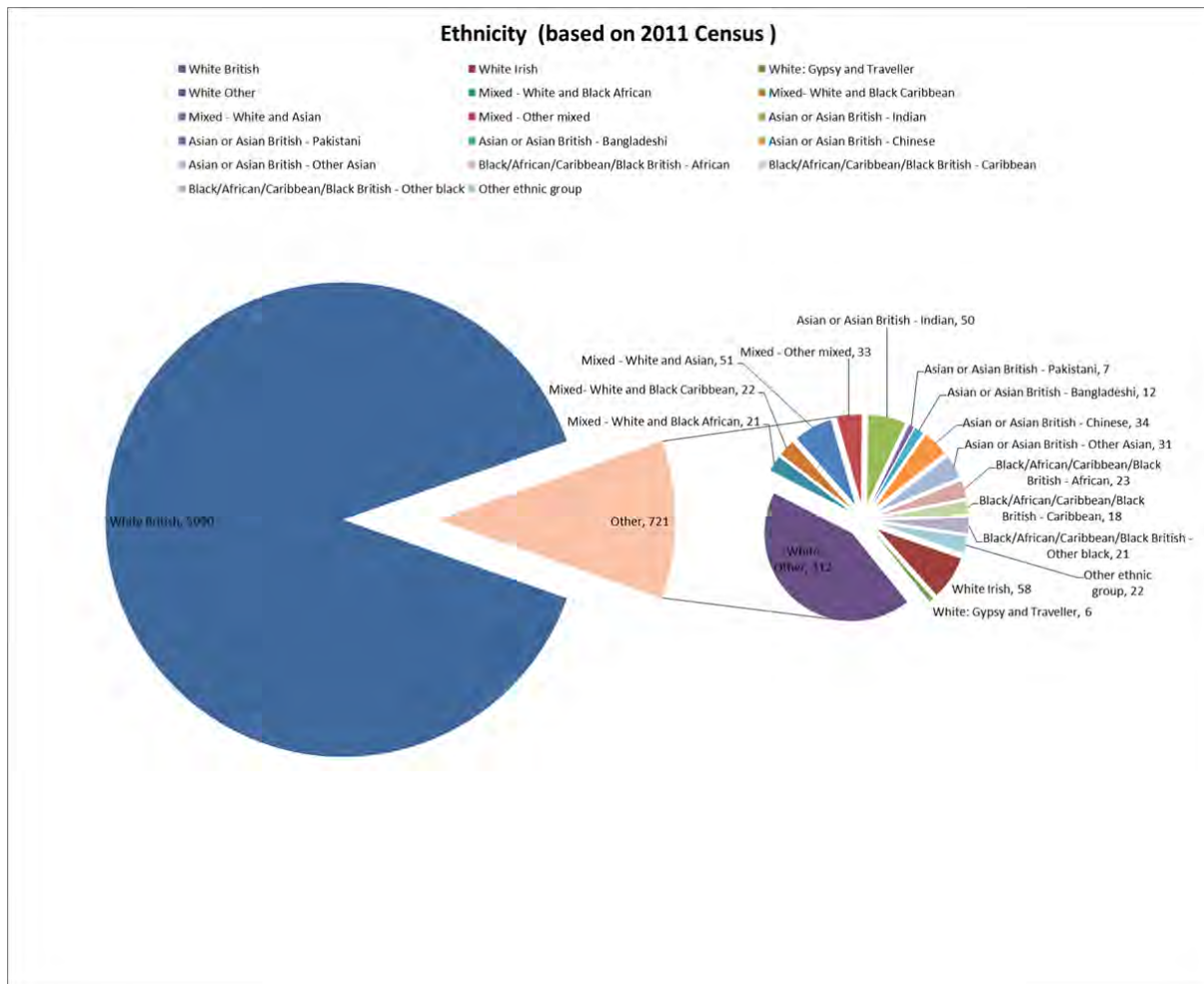
- At the 2011 census the biggest proportion of our residents were aged between 25 and 60 years.



- Since 2001 the main growth in Godmanchester's population has been those either moving towards or at retirement age.



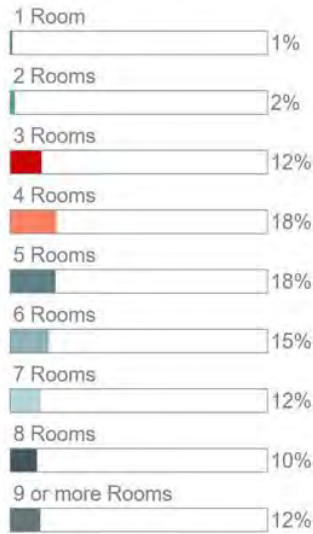
- The Town's population is ethnically diverse.



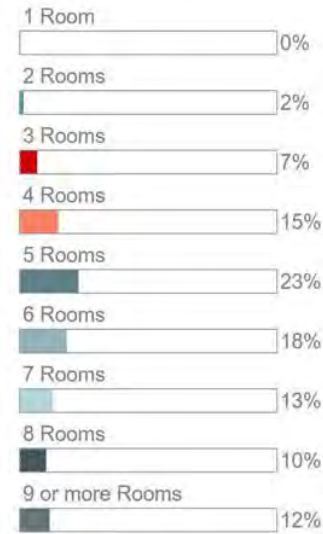
- Patterns of the method people use to travel to work are similar to those in Huntingdonshire but car ownership is lower. This reflects the historic pattern of development which limits space for parking in many parts of the Town and also the good access to services in Godmanchester and Huntingdon.

## Number of Rooms

### Godmanchester

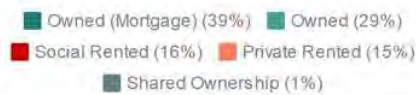


### Huntingdonshire

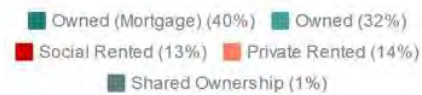


## Housing Tenure

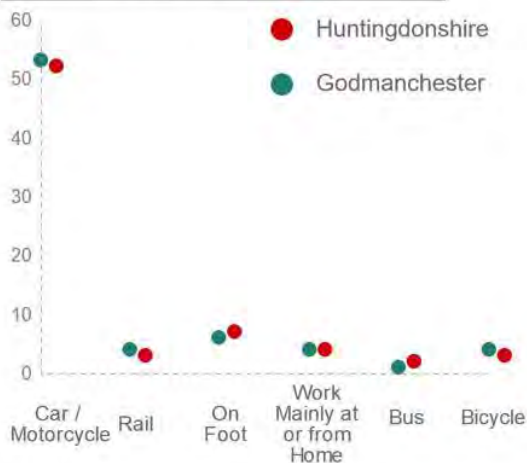
### Godmanchester



### Huntingdonshire



## Method of Travel to Work (%)



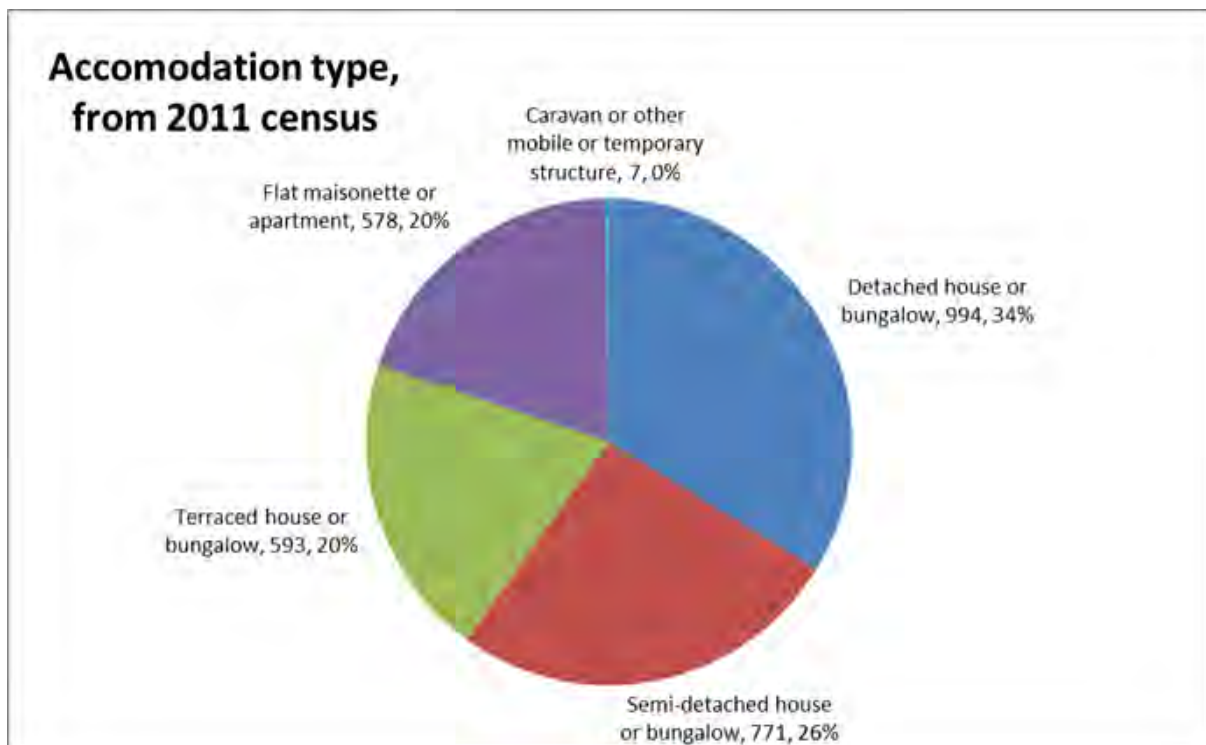
## Average Cars per Household



- Due to the large proportion of flats, Godmanchester has a high proportion of smaller properties.

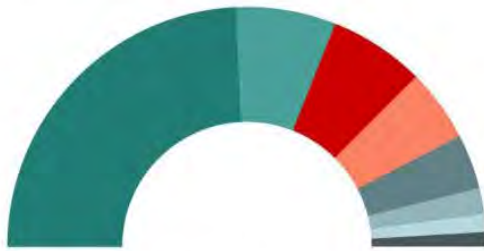


- Social rented properties are higher in Godmanchester than in Huntingdonshire, with ownership levels correspondingly lower.

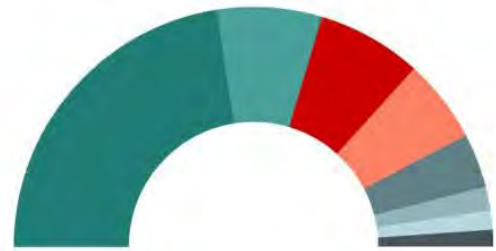


## Economic Activity

Godmanchester



Huntingdonshire



## Qualifications

Godmanchester



Huntingdonshire



- Godmanchester has high levels of economic activity, with many people in full-time employment.
- The overall level of qualifications of Godmanchester residents is high.

## Employment Sector

### Godmanchester



### Huntingdonshire



- Godmanchester has a high proportion of people working in public administration, education and health (compared to Huntingdonshire), with low proportions working in retail services.



## 3 Visions and Objectives

### Challenges for Godmanchester

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges that face the community of Godmanchester. In summary, these challenges are:

#### **Growing population**

- 26% increase in population over the next 20 years<sup>4</sup>
- Help new people engage and enjoy living in the town;
- Ensure all homes are within walking distance of the “historic core”<sup>5</sup>
- Support a growing ageing population<sup>6</sup>;
- Support a population that may change as the local housing market changes, e.g. a growth in pre-school children
- Risk of Godmanchester becoming a dormitory town serving Cambridge and other nearby towns.

#### **Increasing traffic on our narrow roads**

- Existing rush hour congestion through the Town;
- More traffic from new development in Godmanchester and other development in the district;
- Broadly beneficial impact of A14 Improvement Scheme<sup>7</sup> but with longer north bound route from Godmanchester.
- Increased demand for parking combined with some poor and dangerous parking

#### **Protecting our unique heritage and surrounding countryside**

- Maintain Godmanchester’s independence from Huntingdon and separation from surrounding villages and hamlets
- Increased pressure for more new houses making us too like a large sprawling Town and feel less like a historic “village”;
- More new development that detracts from the character of the “historic core” of Godmanchester.

#### **Deteriorating public services**

- Deteriorating roads with increasing numbers of potholes and poor pavements;
- More support for vulnerable people needed from families, volunteers and community groups.

#### **Supporting local businesses to thrive**

- Maintain the range of restaurants and shops;
- Ensure local services, e.g. Doctors have capacity needed.

#### **Ensure that flood risk minimised**

- Risk, albeit low, of flooding in the old Town area if the flood walls are overtopped.

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<sup>4</sup> Based on planning permissions granted in outline in July 2016 and the Draft HDC Development Plan 2036.

<sup>5</sup> The “historic core” refers to the older part of Godmanchester centred on the Causeway and as shown on map in Section 10.

<sup>6</sup> Based on forecast data provide by Cambridge County Council (p11) but also noting that new housing developments are not factored in.

## Vision for Godmanchester

3.2 In consultation with the community, the established vision for Godmanchester is as follows:

***By 2036, Godmanchester will be an even better place to live, work and visit than it is now:***

- ***The town's historic core and rich architecture will have been protected and the beautiful open spaces, particularly along the Ouse Valley, enjoyed by residents and visitors;***
- ***The community spirit, amenity, recreational and spiritual facilities, and good educational opportunities will be the envy of surrounding parishes;***
- ***New residents at Romans' Edge (formerly known as Bearscroft), and in any other new developments, will have been welcomed and any further development will be within the town's existing built boundary;***
- ***Traffic flows through the town will have reduced as a result of the A14 bypass, therefore allowing more people to use buses, walk and cycle safely;***
- ***Developments elsewhere in the district have been planned and the necessary infrastructure has been provided to ensure Godmanchester remains unaffected by these developments in terms of traffic.***



## Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

**3.3** The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan as identified through engagement with the community are as follows:

1. Protect and enhance our beautiful and tranquil countryside and open spaces.
2. Protect and enhance our historic heritage and improve the appearance of the Historic Core.
3. Provide a range of vibrant amenity and recreation facilities that are used by residents and visitors.
4. Ensure any new residential developments meet the housing needs of local people and benefit our Town.
5. Provide essential services and infrastructure.
6. Help local businesses thrive.
7. Help people get around more easily.



## **4 The Natural Environment and Open Space**

- 4.1** It is our aim to ensure that the Town's beautiful open spaces, particularly along the Ouse Valley, can be enjoyed by residents and visitors. These spaces, and the natural environment in which Godmanchester is located are key to make our Town an even better place to live, work and visit.

### **The Importance of the Countryside Setting**

- 4.2** Godmanchester sits alongside the River Great Ouse which is a dominating feature of the landscape and responsible for much of the current patterns of settlement and land use. Especially evident is the impact of sand and gravel extraction as well as extensive and intensive agricultural use. Current and past major transport links, and the now redundant land fill site, also add to the variety of habitats. An additional and important feature within the Town of Godmanchester, are the areas of green space and urban landscaping which together with a number of large homes and gardens provide a rich diversity of habitats.
- 4.3** To the north, east and west of the town a crescent of river and floodplain habitats studded with open water, wetland woodland, scrub and grassland provide significant wildlife value much of which is in the process of being proposed as the Ouse Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty<sup>8</sup>. This strategically important ecological network forms a core component of the green infrastructure within the county and beyond. There is significant potential to further enhance the varied habitats present. Draft policy proposals that enhance the natural environment and the ecological networks, including land along the Ouse Valley, the Local Green Spaces and other designated sites, will be welcomed.
- 4.4** The agricultural land to the south has been improved by the informal linear Silver Street nature reserve.
- 4.5** Portholme Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest [SSSI] and Special Area for Conservation [SAC] is of European significance as it is the largest area of lowland floodplain meadow in the country. Whilst it is in the neighbouring parish of Brampton and falls within their Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area, it is a significant local conservation and recreational resource. It is also a vital visual presence in the Historic Core of the Town.
- 4.6** Smaller areas of meadow and flood plain grassland occur within the Godmanchester boundary and are very significant features.
- 4.7** Godmanchester also has the East Side Common SSSI and the West Side Common both of which are used for grazing and both provide valuable habitats and amenities for the Town.

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<sup>8</sup> The Ouse Valley is also defined in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment 2007, HDC 2007

**4.8** Along much of the valley, the river is flanked by large areas of open water, a legacy of sand and gravel mineral extraction. These sites are important recreational and biodiversity resources.

**4.9** Whilst the agricultural value of the land around Godmanchester is classified as ‘very good’ to ‘good’<sup>9</sup> it contributes much besides food production to the culture and scenic/recreational value of the Town. The meadows alongside the river are subject to flooding but the low, level grazing and cutting of these contribute significantly to the rural character of the area and form significant assets in regard to biodiversity and landscape. The fields to the east and south of the town are of lesser conservation value to those on the valley bottom along the river Great Ouse however in terms of the landscape. The gentle rising land forms an important backdrop to the Town and contributes significantly to view and impression that the visitor gets approaching from the south. “The high quality and distinctive character of this landscape make it vulnerable to changes stemming from developments of an unsympathetic design or scale.”<sup>10</sup>



**4.10** The countryside around the built form of the Town is crucial in providing Godmanchester with its rural character and reflecting its historic past. It is a well-defined semi-rural settlement with a clear built-up form and boundaries. The separate nature of the settlement reflects its history as it pre-dates all surrounding settlements. Its character is derived from this separation and should be retained so that it remains a settlement significantly removed from neighbouring villages. Even the differences in the Medieval Bridge’s construction reflect Godmanchester’s independent nature, with arches that are different from those built from the Huntingdon side.

**4.11** The new A14 route, whilst being publicised as having the potential to bring relief from congestion to Godmanchester, will have a significant impact on our surrounding landscape.

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<sup>9</sup> Defra’s agricultural land classification

<sup>10</sup>Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment 2007, HDC 2007

- 4.12** It is imperative that development which may take place along the new A14 does not reduce the ‘open countryside’ gap between Godmanchester and the new A14. Similarly, it is important that growth in all local settlements, including Godmanchester, does not see the currently separate Towns and villages merge or the ‘open countryside’ gap reduced. The particular gaps of relevance are between Godmanchester and Hilton, Papworth, Papworth St Agnes, The Graveleys, The Offords and The Hemmingfords.

***Policy GMC1: The importance of the countryside setting***

*Development in the Godmanchester Neighbourhood Plan Area shall be focused within or adjoining the settlement boundary as identified in the plan<sup>11</sup>. Development outside the settlement boundary is classified as being in the ‘open countryside’.*

*Development in the ‘open countryside’ will only be acceptable where it is a use which is appropriate to the open countryside and should seek to preserve and protect our best and most versatile agricultural land and land of local environmental value including, but not limited to, The Godmanchester Nature Reserve at Cow Lane<sup>12</sup>, The East Side and West Side Commons in Godmanchester and the Ouse Valley<sup>13</sup>*

- 4.13** The Godmanchester Nature Reserve at Cow Lane (part of which is also known as the Peter Prince Memorial Nature Reserve), the Huntingdonshire Plant Nursery in Park Lane and the reclaimed land at the Cow Lane Landfill Site, are key open amenity spaces; the landfill site is being replanted and will become the new Neolithic Country Park. All of these areas provide important habitats for wildlife as well as important amenities for health and well-being of residents and visitors alike. Especially educational learning and skills development for school-age children and post-school individuals with additional or special educational needs; for recreational use by walkers, runners, cyclist and dog owners; bird watchers, nature enthusiasts and fishermen make use of the lakes. Additional facilities such as toilets, visitor centres, walkways, viewing points and visitor car parking will be important in making sites accessible to visitors. It will be important that such facilities should enhance their location as their prime purpose is to enable visitors to enjoy the wildlife whilst ensuring that those habitats are protected and enhanced.

***Policy GMC2: Development of visitor and tourist facilities***

*Development proposals will be supported where they propose to develop visitor facilities that support the tourist and visitor attractions of the area, including those at our nature reserves and amenity spaces. Proposals need to be: of an appropriate scale for their location; be sympathetic to their location; be sustainable; have minimal impact upon their environment.*

<sup>11</sup> As shown in Chapter 10 of this document

<sup>12</sup> Part of which is also known as the Peter Prince Memorial Nature Reserve

<sup>13</sup> The Ouse Valley as defined and mapped in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment 2007, HDC 2007

## Preserving the Semi-Rural Village ‘Feel’ Within the Town.

**4.14** There are a number of green spaces within the built-up part of the Town. This Green Infrastructure<sup>14</sup> is important to not only provide connection for wildlife but also is crucial to maintain the semi-rural village-like feel of the Town and for residential amenity, as demonstrated through our community consultations. These green spaces are set out in Appendix 1.



**4.15** The Local Green Spaces within or adjoining the settlement boundary are listed in Appendix 1, and are demonstrably special to the local community of Godmanchester. Also in Appendix 1, are sites in the Parish designated for their national and international significance for wildlife and as registered Common Land. Thirdly, Appendix 1 lists other non-designated green spaces, many of which were allocated as public amenity spaces under planning permissions for development on neighbouring land. These are all sites of community value, i.e. they provide a valuable space for recreational activities such as walking, dog walking, informal play, sports or allotment gardening. They are an important feature in and around the town and contribute to its character, adding to the distinctive open feel and reinforcing the sense of a rural village rather than an urban area.

### ***Policy GMC3: Local Green Spaces***

*Godmanchester's designated Local Green Spaces<sup>15</sup> and other green spaces are set out in Appendix 1. Proposals for development on the Local Green Spaces will not be permitted*

<sup>14</sup> "Green infrastructure is defined as a network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities." Cambridgeshire County Council Long Term Transport Strategy

<sup>15</sup> The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land. (NPPF p18)

Green Spaces as listed in Appendix 1. Where areas which maintain the semi-rural feel of Town are identified but cannot be classified as being Local Green Spaces they will be designated as Other Green Spaces.

*unless it can be demonstrated that it is required to enhance the role and function of an identified Local Green Space. Proposals for development on other green spaces should demonstrate that alternative informal recreational space is available within walking distance for neighbouring and future residents, and the semi-rural 'village' feel within the Town will not be seriously compromised.*

## **Greener Streets**

- 4.16** Whilst Godmanchester has many attractive streets, there are some streets with comparatively little greenery. Trees and other vegetation improve the visual features of public spaces and add to well-being, as well as contributing to the wider character of the area<sup>16</sup>. These streets could be made far more attractive, and wildlife friendly, with more street trees and planting.
- 4.17** The green spaces around our built environment, including verges and hedges for example, are important to improving public amenity. It can be difficult to identify who maintains or owns these areas of land. and It will be important that where any new development takes place, there is a clear plan as to whom will maintain the area and that asset records are accurate and reliable so that ownership is clearly identifiable<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> "Urban trees can make a significant contribution to a sustainable, integrated infrastructure approach, promoting value and economic development, climate change adaptation and human health and wellbeing", Baroness Kramer, Minister of State for Transport 14th Sept 2014

<sup>17</sup> Environment Agency in the Pre-Submission Consultation



**Policy GMC4: Landscaping and planting to keep the semi-rural character of the Town**

*All new development should demonstrate a high quality of landscaping and planting that is in keeping with the surrounding area and which replicates and extends the semi-rural character of the Town. This may include, but is not limited to, replicating the local pattern of traditional hedgerow planting, the use of native species and the inclusion of open “village” style greens. It will be important to maintain and extend linked habitats for wildlife: green corridors should be maintained/created to enable wildlife to move from one habitat to the next.*



- 4.18** The Town has a wide range of wildlife living in its green spaces, back gardens, hedgerows and verges. These features provide a vital link to the surrounding countryside, as well as forming individual habitats and are key to giving the Town its semi-rural feel.

## **The River**

- 4.19** Arguably Godmanchester’s greatest asset and the element that defines the Town is the watery highway for both people and wildlife. This adds greatly to the rich diversity of wildlife in the Town and represents 3000 years of water transport and trade from Bronze Age to today. The flora and fauna are typical of the area and are a constant reminder and pathway to the countryside and the landscape beyond. The aquatic biodiversity of the Ouse and its tributaries is important.

**4.20** The river is mainly used for recreational activities and “quiet tourism” such as pleasure boating, kayaking and canoeing. The low impact, low level noise, is important to maintain the tranquillity of the area and to promote the diversity of wildlife.



***Policy GMC5: Making the most of our waterside assets.***

*Development proposals that promote use of the river for quiet and low-impact leisure, wildlife and tourists’ pursuits, with low risk to wildlife and habitats, will be supported. Proposals to protect, restore, replace and enhance public moorings and create new public mooring space to encourage safe access to the river and spaces for short stay<sup>18</sup> visitors will be supported. Public access and use will be prioritised over private access and use. Proposals that will create activity on the river will be expected to demonstrate that such uses do not have a detrimental impact on the tranquil environment through the creation of excessive noise or pollution.*

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<sup>18</sup> Up to 48 Hours as set out by the Great Ouse Boating Association

## Play Areas and Recreation Spaces

- 4.21** Godmanchester has a reasonable amount of play area provision which is quite well distributed throughout the Town<sup>19</sup>



- 4.22** The new development at Romans' Edge will provide some additional play spaces. There is deficit in natural and semi-natural areas. A number of potential green space sites for example, Wigmore Meadow where the wildflower areas could be extended to provide the biodiversity element needed, have been identified.<sup>20</sup> Huntingdon District Council (HDC) have identified that we need more parks and gardens. It will be important to ensure that the balance of parks, gardens and play spaces is kept under review to ensure they meet the changing needs of the Town.



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<sup>19</sup> HDC Paper March 2016: Godmanchester & St Neots - Needs Analysis of Green Space & Play Facilities, A Merrick.

<sup>20</sup> HDC Paper March 2016: Godmanchester & St Neots - Needs Analysis of Green Space & Play Facilities, A Merrick.

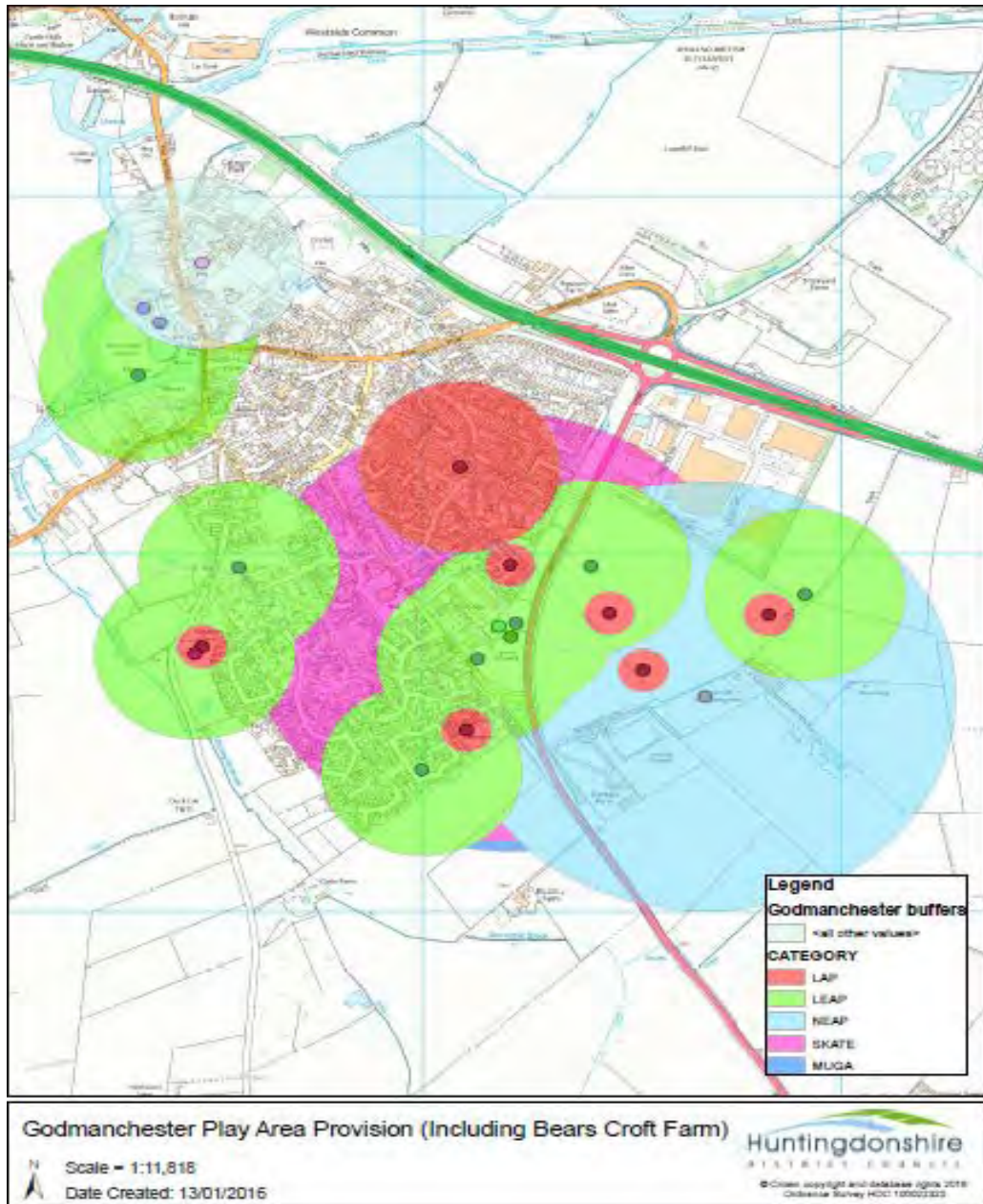
**Figure 2: Green Space Provision as set out in Godmanchester and St Neots: Needs Analysis of Green Spaces and Play Spaces, HDC 2016**<sup>21</sup> A definition of what each heading means can be found in the footnote below.<sup>22</sup>

Green Space Provision (ha)	Policy	Actual (ha)*
Parks & Gardens	3.27	0.09
Green Corridors	0.00	0.41
Natural & Semi Natural	1.57	0.00
Allotments & Community Gardens	2.18	3.52
Amenity Green Space	7.43	9.66
<b>Total Green Space</b>	<b>14.45</b>	<b>13.68</b>
Play Provision (ha)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.70</b>	<b>0.57</b>
* HDC, TC & PC and 3rd party ownership all included		

<sup>21</sup> Godmanchester and St Neots: Needs Analysis of Green Spaces and Play Spaces, HDC 2016

<sup>22</sup> *Parks and Gardens*: "This type of open space includes urban parks, formal gardens and country parks that provide opportunities for various informal recreation and community events, within settlement boundaries"  
*Natural and Semi-Natural*: This type of open space includes woodlands, urban forestry, scrubland, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands, nature reserves and wastelands with a primary purpose of wildlife conservation and bio-diversity within the settlement boundaries. *Amenity Greenspace*; This type of open space is most commonly found in housing areas. It includes informal recreation spaces and greenspaces in and around housing, with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancing the appearance of residential or other areas. It also includes village greens. Amenity space is often the only type of provision found in smaller settlements.

**Figure 3: Green Space Provision as currently available in Godmanchester and St Neots: Needs Analysis of Green Spaces and Play Spaces, HDC 2016**



Legend terminology: LAP: Local Area for Play LEAP: Local Equipped Area for Play NEAP: Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play : SKATE: skate park; MUGA: Multi Use Games Area<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Defined by Fields In Trust and Play England.

- 4.23** Whilst the Town has a number of play areas, HDC have identified that we need more and the additional play areas proposed for the Romans' Edge will help address this.



- 4.24** It has also been identified that the north of the town would benefit from an additional play area. The area where there is sufficient space is to the side of the Cricket Pitch, near to Pavilions Close. “However, if there were an opportunity to upgrade a LEAP<sup>24</sup> play area to a NEAP<sup>25</sup> play area in the north-west the funding to increase the size and play designation of a LEAP to a NEAP would need to be financed through securing a Section 106 funding from local developments”<sup>26</sup>.

***Policy GMC6: Improving and increasing all our public Green Space<sup>27</sup>***

*Development proposals will be supported which:*

*Improve our Green Spaces and increase the provision of “parks and gardens”<sup>28</sup> for public use; and*

*Create more natural and semi-natural<sup>29</sup> green spaces giving improved public amenity space for mental and physical health and educational use.*

<sup>24</sup> LEAP: a local equipped area for play with a minimum of 6 play experiences

<sup>25</sup> NEAP: neighbourhood equipped area for play with a minimum of 9 play experiences

<sup>26</sup> HDC Paper March 2016: Godmanchester & St Neots - Needs Analysis of Green Space & Play Facilities, A Merrick.

<sup>27</sup> “Green spaces” refer to Local Green Spaces and Godmanchester’s Other Green Spaces

<sup>28</sup> As defined in HDC Paper March 2016: Godmanchester & St Neots - Needs Analysis of Green Space & Play Facilities, A Merrick. *Parks and Gardens*: “This type of open space includes urban parks, formal gardens and country parks that provide opportunities for various informal recreation and community events, within settlement boundaries”

<sup>29</sup> As defined in HDC Paper March 2016: Godmanchester & St Neots - Needs Analysis of Green Space & Play Facilities, A Merrick. *Parks and Gardens*. “*Natural and Semi-Natural*: This type of open space includes woodlands, urban forestry, scrubland, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands, nature reserves and wastelands with a primary purpose of wildlife conservation and bio-diversity within the settlement boundaries.”

- 4.25** Walking for pleasure and recreation is important for health and well-being and Godmanchester’s rural setting lends itself to this. There are several well-used local footpaths and walkways, including The Charter Way<sup>30</sup>, that lead beyond the settlement boundary and out into the surrounding open countryside: this includes the Ouse Valley Way. It is important that new routes are provided over time to ensure that we retain our semi-rural feel and our connection to the open countryside around us.
- 4.26** Dog walking is part and parcel of daily life for many residents and yet there are no green spaces in the Town designated as “off-the-leash” spaces. The provision of public amenity space that would enable off-the-leash dog walking space will be supported.

<p><b><i>Policy GMC7: Improving access to the countryside</i></b></p> <p><i>Development proposals will be supported that provide walking routes and enable ongoing access to the wider countryside.</i></p>
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### **Community Plant and Tree Nursery and Allotments**

- 4.27** Godmanchester hosts the Huntingdonshire Community Plant and Tree Nursery (Park Lane) which provides plants and produce for HDC and the public. In addition, it also provides a social and learning space for adults and children (and has been used for pupils and young adults with Special and Additional Education Needs<sup>31</sup>). It is also a meeting point for HDC Health Walks. This space is listed as a ‘Asset of Community Value’ but there is a real possibility that it will be lost to development over time so it will be important to find a replacement site to enable this valued resource to remain within the Town.
- 4.28** There are currently 140 allotments covering 7.5 acres with more than 100 allotment holders. Those on the current site, on Cambridge Road, have been in use for nearly 100 years and are managed by the Allotment Association. There are more allotments allocated at the Romans’ Edge development. These allotments are a vital part of the town. The families and children involved enjoy an activity which is productive and healthy.

<p><b><i>Policy GMC8: Ensuring public amenity space is retained within the Town.</i></b></p> <p><i>Where public nursery and allotment space is lost through redevelopment for housing or other uses then an alternative easily accessible provision of equal scale and quality should be provided to the community within the parish.</i></p>
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<sup>30</sup> Route to commemorate the anniversary of the Town’s Charter.

<sup>31</sup> Used by local schools for enrichment (Pupil Premium) and SEN/Additional Needs support as well as for young people spending their Personal Learning Budgets.

## Sports Facilities

- 4.29** Godmanchester has a range of sports on offer for residents, with some utilising dedicated spaces and others using local recreation spaces. Whilst many sports are not available in the Town, a significant number are on offer in the neighbouring Town of Huntingdon and the wider area. It remains important for health, well-being and a sense of community for sporting opportunities to remain and grow in the Town.
- 4.30** Godmanchester has a cricket ground which is owned by HDC and is run by a group of volunteers. The wooden Cricket Pavilion is reaching the end of its life span and will need to be replaced. This open space is also well used by residents for recreation and as a public amenity space. This is an HDC “Strategic Facility”<sup>32</sup> and is listed as an HDC Community asset.
- 4.31** Godmanchester has a small swimming pool on the Community Academy site which currently offers swimming facilities and lessons to the school and is open to the public. This is a well-used resource and those using it travel from far beyond the Town.
- 4.32** The new development at Bearscroft Farm, now known as Romans’ Edge will have a green sports pitches. The final details are yet to be determined but it is hoped that these spaces will encourage an even greater number of sports and sporting opportunities on offer in the Town.
- 4.33** Godmanchester has a floodlit Multi- Use Games Area (MUGA) at Judith’s Field which is freely available for the community to use.
- 4.34** The Town is home to both a thriving running club and cycling club. These are community led groups and are run on an informal basis.
- 4.35** A number of martial arts groups meet in the Town’s community facilities and we have a gym operating from one of our industrial estates.
- 4.36** Whilst we are on the river, we do not have any water-based sports groups based in the Town: there are active boat clubs and a canoeing club in Huntingdon, a dragon boat club in St. Neots and sailing is offered at Graffham Water.

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<sup>32</sup> Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-21



- 4.37** Godmanchester is home to an established football club, Godmanchester Rovers, and new affiliated youth football club, Godmanchester Town. The land where Rovers have their ground is leased from HDC and is accessed by the farm track, along Bearscroft Lane via the A1198. The site provides: two 11m by 11m pitches used by seven teams (three Rovers and four Town teams); a 9m by 9m pitch used by three teams (Town); a 7m by 7m pitch used by two teams (Town); and a mini-soccer school. The number of teams using in site in 2017 – 18 is set to increase to between 18 and 24. Although the team have invested in a club house and have significantly upgraded the facilities to meet league requirements (car parking, stands, turnstiles) they have a fundamental issue with the land on which the pitches sit: it routinely becomes waterlogged and is often unplayable. HDC note that ground would benefit from a 3G pitch<sup>33</sup>, noting its impact on public participation and identifying it as local need. The football ground is now listed as an HDC Community asset.
- 4.38** The Town also hosts other youth football teams that train on the recreational spaces, including Judith’s Field but are unable to play matches due to the lack of available, appropriate pitches<sup>34</sup>
- 4.39** Godmanchester Rovers are keen to convert their football pitches to the latest all weather pitches, which they would use as a wider community sporting facility. These would enable play all year-round and, as they would be lit, would enable longer hours of use in the darker months.
- 4.40** Godmanchester has a small Tennis Club which has been utilising the tennis courts at Godmanchester Primary School. HDC also note this in the Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-21: “These areas have been identified on the criteria they are within large enough settlements to support additional facilities and there is an obvious discrepancy in level of provision compared to similar settlements”. However, these facilities are being used as a temporary home for the Bridge Academy. It would be good to find a new more permanent facility within the Town as they currently have no place in which to play.
- 4.41** The Royal Oak Bowls Club has a bowling green accessed via St. Anne’s Lane. This is an important community asset and is used for regular club sessions.

***Policy GMC9: Ensuring a wide range of sporting and recreation facilities are retained and expanded within the Town***

*Development proposals to retain, improve and enhance current sports and recreation facilities and offer new additional facilities that extend the range of sports on offer will be supported.*

<sup>33</sup> Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2016-21

<sup>34</sup> This includes pitches which meet the needs of the Football Associations league requirements.

## 5 Heritage and the Built Environment

- 5.1 Godmanchester’s “historic core” and rich architecture is important to its character and is part of what makes it unique. This aspect of Godmanchester will need to be protected as the Town changes with time. However, what makes the Town special is its residents. To make our Town an even better place to live it needs to meet the needs of its residents. It is our aspiration that Godmanchester will have the community spirit, amenity, recreational and spiritual facilities, and good educational opportunities that will be the envy of surrounding parishes.
- 5.2 As many of Godmanchester’s historic and heritage assets are covered by national protection under legislation (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990), the shortness of this section does not reflect the value we place on them but rather seeks not to duplicate provision under planning law that already provide protection.

### Heritage

- 5.3 Godmanchester is rich in history, archaeology and archaeological artefacts: its heritage is what makes it unique and provides its character. It is relatively unusual to have a settlement with such a long history which is still very much in evidence in its structure and buildings. The two conservation areas are full of listed buildings showing architecture from the last 400 years.
- 5.4 As the Town changes, archaeological investigations permit us a glimpse into our past: there are significant Roman sites around the Town<sup>35</sup>, many of which are now shown through the interpretation boards near to these sites. In one location, we are able to see the original Roman Road - Ermine Street – visible only some two feet below the surface of the soil. In preparing for the new development at Romans’ Edge the archaeological work unearthed an iron age settlement. Under the former landfill site lie the remains of a Neolithic Temple It is important that we record the location of these sites and enable their story to form part of historical understanding of Godmanchester as a settlement.
- 5.5 The Museum has artefacts that date back to the Roman Town including a section of Roman Road. Currently the museum opens on a temporary basis in the Queen Elizabeth School: this means that exhibits can only be viewed on six occasions each year or by prior arrangement.

#### **Policy GMC10: Promoting Godmanchester’s history and heritage**

*Development proposals that seek to promote and share the history and heritage of Godmanchester through development of the visitor economy and of tourist facilities will be supported. Proposals need to be: of an appropriate scale for their location; be sympathetic to their location; have low-impact and enhance their environment. Development proposals to provide a permanent home to the Museum within the historic core will be supported.*

<sup>35</sup> As documented by Professor Upex, Archaeologist and Landscape Historian at Cambridge University in conjunction with the Porch Museum.

## The Built Environment

**5.6** The Town has a fine grade I\* parish Church of mainly 14th Century construction. In 1853, the whole building was restored under the direction of the famous architect Sir G. Gilbert Scott RA. The Church is an important landmark in the Town and views to it are important to the local community. Plans are in hand to develop the internal space for greater use by the community.



**5.7** There is also a Scheduled Monument in the plan area, a moated site 170m east of the church.

**5.8** The focal point of the historic core of the Town is centred on School Hill, the location of Godmanchester's Chinese Bridge which is probably the Town's most photographed feature. The Queen Elizabeth School and the Town Hall, both Grade II\* listed are here too.

**5.9** The buildings along the Causeway are indicative of the character of Godmanchester. Fronting the old Viking harbour, are properties (commercial and residential) of architectural merit which are often photographed to illustrate the historic heritage.



**5.10** Godmanchester has an unusually large number of listed buildings, the highest number in Huntingdonshire at 125 listed buildings and counting, marking it out as a place with a special heritage<sup>36</sup>. There are significant buildings in the roads that radiate from the centre of the historic core including West Street, Cambridge Road Post Street and Earning Street. Properties here include large farmhouses from the 15th Century as well as bakeries, forges, cordwainers and a large number of former inns. In addition, in West Street, is Farm Hall, built in 1746 for the Recorder of Huntingdon. One of the Godmanchester's most imposing buildings is Island Hall, an elegant riverside mansion built in the late 1740s.



**5.11** Godmanchester has two Conservation Areas: Post Street<sup>37</sup> and Earning Street<sup>38</sup>. These are important nationally, as well as locally, as they demonstrate the history and heritage of the Town. (See Appendix 3 for a link to the list of all Grade I and II listings.)

***Policy GMC11: Ensuring development maintains and enhances the character of the Town and reflects its heritage and history.***

*Development proposals within the historic core are expected to demonstrate that they are sympathetic to the surrounding buildings (including listed building), in terms of scale, design and amenity. Development proposals should reinforce the local character including the grain, scale, density and architectural distinctiveness.*

<sup>36</sup> HDC Overview and Scrutiny Panel Report June 2015: A14 Joint Local Impact Report Statement Of Common Ground And Environmental Impact Assessment Matters

<sup>37</sup> HDC Godmanchester (Post Street) Conservation Area Character Statement 2002

<sup>38</sup> HDC Godmanchester (earning Street) Conservation Area Character Statement 2003

**5.12** Godmanchester is not a living museum and the needs of its residents and businesses will change over time. It is important that historic buildings remain in use and are well-maintained. It is also important that as build uses change we do not lose the important features that tell us about the buildings past uses, and the Town’s long and varied heritage.

***Policy GMC12: Protecting and celebrating our heritage***

*In order to protect and celebrate Godmanchester’s heritage, development proposals that seek to alter or extend listed or historic buildings and structures should retain any key features that show their past use.*



## 6 Housing

- 6.1 Over the HDC Draft Local Plan period to 2036, most residential development will be delivered on the Romans' Edge site. With this site, currently in progress, there is little potential to influence the detail of the housing development that it provides. However, any subsequent housing developments in Godmanchester need to address some important principles that have been established as important by the local community. In summary, these must ensure that any new development enhances the Town and provides the right mix of houses for all residents with affordable, good quality homes for families and the elderly.



- 6.2 In writing the Plan, we are encouraged not to duplicate planning policies which already exist in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) or in planning policies already adopted<sup>39</sup>, or proposed,<sup>40</sup> by HDC as the planning authority. Consequently, there may be housing policies that are not covered in this document as they already exist elsewhere: the Huntingdonshire District Council policies which apply are set out in Appendix 2.

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<sup>39</sup> The HDC Core Strategy 2009

<sup>40</sup> The HDC Draft Local Plan to 2036

## Residential Development

- 6.3** New housing development of a moderate or minor scale is defined in Policy CS3 of the Core Strategy as developments of 10-59 dwellings and up to 9 dwellings respectively. Back land development is defined as development on land behind the rear building line of existing housing or other development, and is usually land that has previously been used as gardens, open spaces and wildlife habitats.
- 6.4** Infill development involves the development of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage. It usually consists of frontage plots only and often comprises side gardens of existing houses.
- 6.5** One of the issues raised by the community has been the concern that infill development would serve to inappropriately increase the density of development in the Town thereby having a detrimental impact.
- 6.6** The combined, cumulative effect of new development including back land and infill development is that it can change the character of a settlement: here that would mean from a semi-rural character to a much more urban character. This would not be appropriate in Godmanchester, where care and attention to the scale, design and layout of new housing and its site context must be given.

### ***Policy GMC13: Residential development.***

*Residential development within or adjoining the settlement boundary<sup>41</sup> of Godmanchester should reflect the character of the surrounding area and protect amenity of neighbours. Sites within reasonable walking distance of the Town's historic core will be favourably considered. Development should be of minor or moderate scale<sup>42</sup>, or represent infilling or back land development. Infilling or back land development should reinforce the character of the existing street scene by reflecting the scale, mass, height and form of its neighbours, as well as the grain and density of its location. It should also reflect the semi-rural nature of the Town with its historic core.*

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<sup>41</sup> As defined on the Settlement Boundary map in this document

<sup>42</sup> Moderate or minor scale is defined as developments of 10-59 dwellings and up to 9 dwellings respectively

## Improving Parking in the Town

- 6.7** Godmanchester residents have a high reliance on cars for accessing employment as shown in Section 2 of this Plan. The average number of cars per household is 1.4. However, a high proportion of homes in the Town, mainly in the Historic Core, have little or no off-street parking due to their historic nature – quite simply, many were built long before cars were invented. A number of local business, as well as the doctors’ surgery, operate in this part of the Town and so the problem is compounded by individuals who need to park to access those services and amenities.
- 6.8** A further challenge is that as the roads came long before motorised vehicles many are narrower than a normal carriageway further reducing the opportunities for on-street parking. A number of our roads are major thoroughfares<sup>43</sup> and are marked out with double yellow lines to prevent parking so as to maintain traffic flows and safe passage. This further reduces the number of possible on-street parking opportunities.
- 6.9** Parking is a real issue for Godmanchester residents, whether it is in terms of amenity for householders or safety where parking is poor and causes obstructions. It is vital that changes to the Town do not make the situation worse than it is already.
- 6.10** There is limited on-street and off-street parking in the historic core of the Town with no easy solution given the physical constraints of the environment. Vehicles parked on pavements create a safety issues for pedestrians and drivers.



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<sup>43</sup> As identified by CCC Highways



- 6.11** The two local primary schools (three with Romans' Edge development) occasionally require buses/coaches to park to load and unload pupils but these are relatively infrequent. However, parking for school visitors overflows into neighbouring streets and there is local congestion associated with parents dropping and collecting children.
- 6.12** Godmanchester has three public car parks; all of which are owned and operated by HDC. People working in Huntingdon mostly use the Bridge Place Car Park. The Mill Yard Car Park is largely used by commuters from outside of the Town and by residents who live on Post Street. The car park on Park Lane is used mainly by those visiting the primary school, children's centre and swimming pool.
- 6.13** Increasingly Godmanchester is being used by commuters from outlying villages who park due its free parking and bus links to Huntingdon Railway station and the Guided Bus Way link into Cambridge. These additional cars reduce parking for residents, businesses and visitors.
- 6.14** Whippet, the local bus operator, has recently withdrawn a large section of the Town's bus route, citing obstructions caused by poor parking as being such a significant issue that it was no longer feasible to maintain the service.
- 6.15** Some of our recent housing developments clearly demonstrate that sometimes parking designs simply do not deliver what residents need and this then leads to cars parking on the roadside and on verges and pavements<sup>44</sup>. We also have restricted road access which causes issues for cars, bin lorries and, more importantly, emergency service vehicles. The community expressed a preference for new developments to avoid the use of parking courts where possible. These were felt to encourage anti-social behaviour and were often under-used, with residents choosing to park in front of their properties instead.
- 6.16** It is imperative that the additional vehicles associated with the new Romans' Edge development do not exacerbate the situation of unacceptable levels of on-street parking. It is also considered that there should be no reduction of existing parking provision, either off-street or on-street, unless it can be appropriately replaced with an alternative offer.

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<sup>44</sup> HDC's Draft Design Guide 2016 utilises images from Godmanchester to exemplify where parking design does not work

- 6.17** New residential development in Godmanchester should include parking provision which is based on a careful assessment of the site's location and the character of the surrounding area, as well as the nature and form of the proposed development, and the size of the dwellings (number of bedrooms). Regard should be had for guidance on parking in the Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2017, when residential or other development proposals are put forward.
- 6.18** Cycling is addressed in a later chapter but it should be noted that all new development should provide adequate secure cycle parking provision.

***Policy GMC14: For new residential development, plans should not exacerbate any pressure on 'on-street' parking and should provide numbers of off-street parking spaces appropriate to the site's location and the character of the proposal. The number of spaces should reflect the mix, size and type of housing.***

*Parking spaces can take the form of spaces or garaging/car port facilities, but must be permanently available for parking use and must meet the minimum standards for size as set out by the Local Planning Authority<sup>45</sup>.*

*Development that results in the loss of existing off- or on-street parking will be resisted unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the amount of overall provision is adequate.*

*Proposals for new commercial development (A, B, or D-use class) must demonstrate that they can provide adequate off-road parking for their workforce, customers and deliveries and will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties or existing businesses.*

*Proposals for new commercial activity that include for the provision of a Travel Plan will be supported, particularly where use of public and community transport is included.*

*Proposals that result in the loss of public car-parking facilities in the historic core will be resisted. Such proposals will only be acceptable if parking provision is made elsewhere within the historic core<sup>46</sup> that is at least of an equivalent size, quality and accessibility as the existing facility.*

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<sup>45</sup> Huntingdon District Council Design Guide 2017

## Townscape

### Street Furniture, Hard Landscaping, Lighting and Signage

- 6.19** Godmanchester is proud of its appearance winning ‘Best small town’ category of the Anglia in Bloom competition in 2014. In order to ensure that Godmanchester continues to have an attractive townscape, it is expected that the landscaping of new development should demonstrate that it is of a high quality and in keeping with the surrounding character. As part of this, any new planting should seek to use similar species to those used elsewhere in the town: this policy is already covered under the greener streets section.
- 6.20** It is important that the appearance of the street scene is enhanced where possible, not just by the soft landscaping but by the hard landscaping, street lamps, road signs and shop signs. Litterbins, benches and seats are welcomed where they are carefully located to serve the needs of residents and visitors and enhance public amenity. It is important that these reflect the semi-rural nature of the Town as well as its heritage and history.
- 6.21** HDC have already reviewed the hard landscaping in Town and consider that the “heavily engineered nature of the historic core”: would benefit from a review to consider whether there are other hard landscaping treatment that would be more sympathetic “than the “wall to wall ‘black-top’ hard surfacing across the street frontage. The roads that pass through the historic core<sup>47</sup> form some of Huntingdonshire’s most historic streets and are of major historical significance located within designated Conservation Areas and containing a wealth of Listed Buildings. Over many years, these roads have become more and more traffic-dominated to the detriment of its historic nature and indeed, the street scene is dominated by almost continuous carriageway and footway.”<sup>48</sup>

***Policy GMC15: Improving and enhancing the Town through street furniture lights and signage that reflect the Town’s character***

*The provision of street furniture<sup>49</sup>, hard landscaping, lighting and signage will be expected to minimise the visual clutter in the Historic Core and to enhance its historic character. Where new provision is made, it should be in keeping with its surroundings, have regard to energy conservation and public safety and be sympathetic to the historic character of the Town. Signage which seeks to interpret and promote the Town’s heritage and history will be supported.*

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<sup>47</sup> Principally but not limited to: The Avenue, Post Street, the Causeway, West Street, Cambridge Street and Cambridge Road, Corpus Christi, London Street and Earning Street

<sup>48</sup> HDC Paper to Environmental Well-Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel 10 June A14 Joint Impact Report Appendix B

<sup>49</sup> Litterbins benches and seats

## Flooding and Surface Water Flood Risk

- 6.22** Flood risk is an ever-present threat from the river but recent improvements to defences have reduced the risks from a 5% chance to a 1% chance or a 1 in 100 year risk from a 1 in 50 year risk Error! Bookmark not defined.
- 6.23** Significant parts of Godmanchester are still at risk from surface water flooding, as shown on the Environment Agency's flood maps:
- 6.24** Traditional drainage systems involve piping water off-site as quickly as possible are dependent on drains, sewers and ditches being kept clean. Increasingly detention basins and swales are being used to store excess water before it is then released into water management systems in a controlled way to avoid flooding. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) reduce flood risk by attenuating the rate and quantity of surface water run-off from a site, promoting ground water recharge and improving water quality and amenity.

### ***Policy GMC 16: Reducing Surface Water Flood Risk***

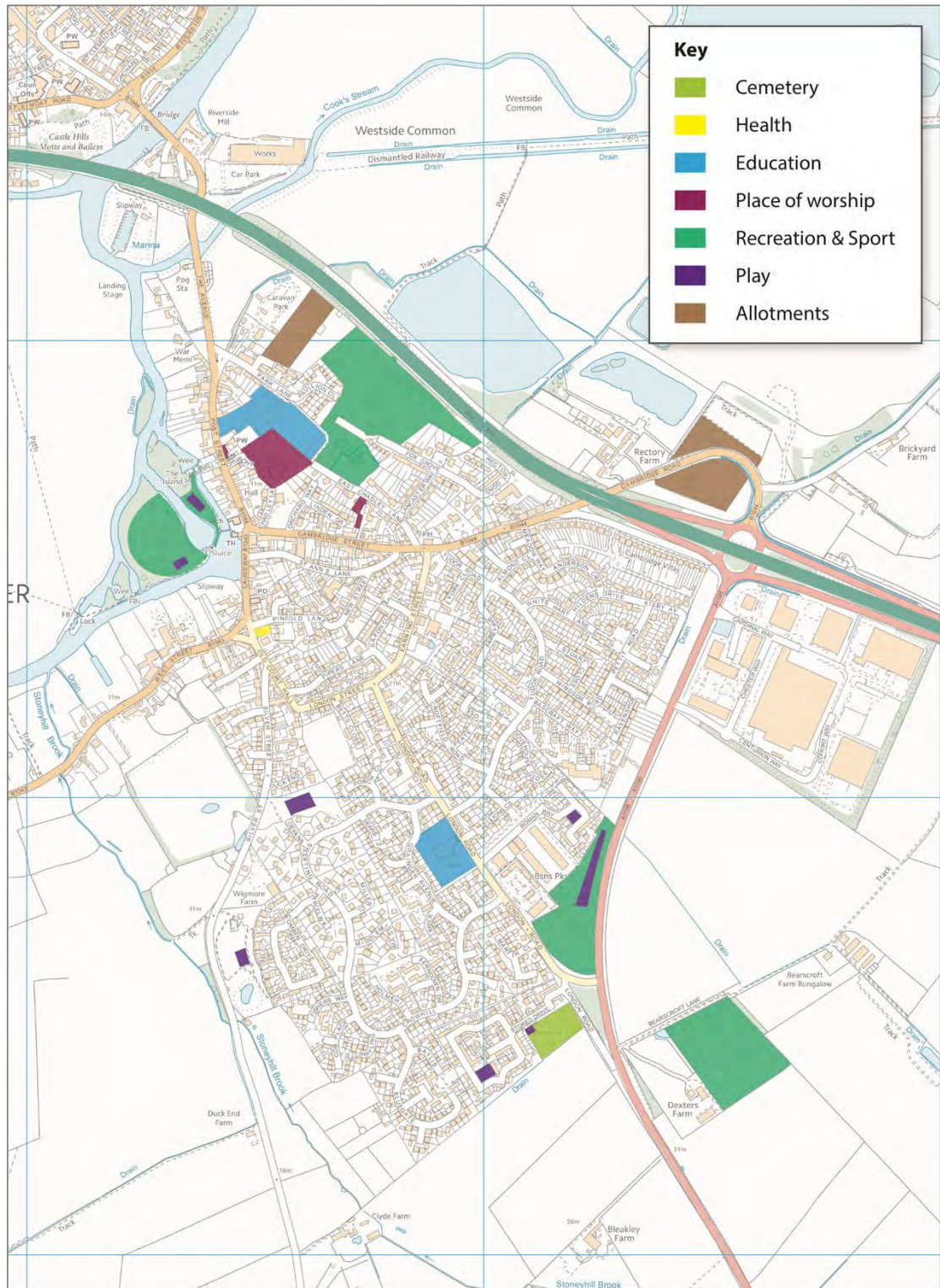
*Development proposals will be expected to include Surface Water Management Systems (SuDS) in new builds and for retrofitting in order to reduce the existing surface water flood risk. Detention basins and dry swales provide a dual functionality and can be incorporated within the landscape and public green/open space. Provision for future adoption and maintenance will be essential.*

## 7 Community Infrastructure and Businesses

- 7.1** For a community to thrive, its local infrastructure must provide for a range and choice of activities. It is important that what already exists within a community is protected and that additional infrastructure is provided to address the needs arising from growth.
- 7.2** One of the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan is to provide a range of vibrant amenity and recreation facilities that are used by residents and visitors. The way the Plan seeks to achieve this is by:
- improving existing indoor and outdoor recreational and sporting areas;
  - provide more facilities to reflect the changing needs of the community;
  - developing the community spirit in the Town;
  - developing moorings, fishing platforms and slipways to promote better use of the river;
  - ensuring our Town has sufficient good schools, health services, a wide range of local shops, and post office/banking services.



Godmanchester Neighbourhood Plan | Map 1 - Community Facilities



Based on The Ordnance Survey Mapping. (C) Crown Copyright.

## Protection of Existing and Provision of New Community Facilities

- 7.3** A range of community facilities have been identified as being needed by the residents. However, it is recognised that, over the plan period, it is likely that new or larger facilities will be needed to support the growth in the population or when ongoing maintenance is no longer financially viable. It is also recognised that needs and fashions change and the facilities may no longer be suitable, sustainable or well-used, needing to be updated, replaced, removed or a new facility offered.
- 7.4** This policy seeks to provide general support for the provision of such community facilities, as opposed to identifying a finite list or specific locations for the provision of amenities. It is recognised that the funding of such facilities is constrained and that the limited amount of residential development in the Parish means that developer contributions will also be limited. Therefore, it will be important that the local community uses its resources to lever in funds through grants and other means in order to fund the bulk of the cost of any new facility.

### ***Policy GMC17: Provision of community facilities within the Town***

*Proposals that would result in the loss of community facilities will only be permitted if alternative and equivalent community facilities are provided, unless it can be demonstrated there is no longer a need or no reasonable hope of services being sustained.*

*Alternative community provision\* will be required to meet the following criteria:*

- *the scale<sup>50</sup> of the alternative provision must be at least of an equivalent scale to the existing provision; and*
- *the alternative site must be at least of equivalent standard in terms of layout to the existing provision; and*
- *the location of the alternative provision must be generally accessible by foot and within or adjacent to the built-up area of Godmanchester Town*

*The provision of new community facilities to address the needs of the residents of the parish will be supported. These needs could relate to new recreation, leisure, spiritual, social, education and medical facilities.*

*\*unless it can be demonstrated there is no longer a need or no reasonable hope of services being sustained.*



<sup>50</sup> Scale refers to range of facilities that are on offer rather than purely the size of the building or plot of land

## Lawn Cemetery and Closed Church Yard

- 7.5** There is a “closed” churchyard, including a non-conformist burial ground, located at St. Mary The Virgin parish church. This means that it is no longer open for new burials. The Town Council is responsible for maintaining the Churchyard and non-conformist burial ground in conjunction with the Diocese of Ely.
- 7.6** The Lawn Cemetery is located adjacent to Stokes Drive and is managed by the Town Council. It provides burial plots and space for the interment of ashes. There is currently 50% space available for the future needs of the Town. In time additional space will be required: If the Town’s population grows at the current rate new space may be required from 2025. However, should the population change significantly that space may be required much earlier.

### ***GMC18 Space for burials***

*Development proposals that provide additional burial space, including additional space at the Lawn Cemetery, will be supported.*

## Health Services

- 7.7** Godmanchester’s population is growing as our housing supply increases and so too is the demand for health services. Our population is statistically in good health (over 80%) and our average life expectancy age has risen to 85 years and with that come a higher level of long term health issues and disabilities<sup>Error! Bookmark not defined.</sup>. We have steady birth rate but the growth of our community by a third with the new houses at Roman’s Edge may well see this increase.
- 7.8** Godmanchester is served by a single NHS doctors’ surgery (Roman Gate Surgery in Pinfold Lane) which is part of a practice serving Godmanchester and part of Huntingdon. The Roman Gate site is limited by the adjacent roads and building and there is already an issue with the lack of parking for staff and patients.





- 7.9** Godmanchester has not had a dental surgery from some years: the nearest NHS practices are in Huntingdon.
- 7.10** Godmanchester benefits from having Hinchingsbrooke hospital within a short car journey, however there is no direct bus route. The hospital currently provides a range of services including an Accident and Emergency Department. Specialist services are offered at Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge, Peterborough City Hospital and Papworth Hospital (due to relocate to The Addenbrookes site).
- 7.11** It will be important to ensure that there is adequate provision of easily accessible health service within Godmanchester to reduce the need to travel for day-to-day health care such as GPs and dentists. However, recognising that those who need health care may also need to use cars it is vital that adequate off-street car parking is provided that is designed to grow as the demand for services increases with a changing population.

***Policy GMC19: Provision of health services to meet the needs of residents***

*Development proposals that improve the availability of, and accessibility to, health services within Godmanchester, especially GP and dental services, will be supported.*

## Education

- 7.12** Godmanchester has a number of well used pre-schools and nurseries within the Town. The projected numbers of under-fives suggest that more pre-school place providers are needed. Nursery provision in Godmanchester is already set to grow with new places opening at the Bridge Academy. This should mean there are adequate numbers but as the Town changes it will be important that parents have easy access to high quality places.
- 7.13** Godmanchester is currently served by two primary schools (St Anne's and Godmanchester Primary Academy) with a new primary school (The Bridge Academy) being built as part of the Romans' Edge development. All schools offer education from Reception to Year 6 as well as hosting a wide range of other community based activities.
- 7.14** There is no secondary school in Godmanchester: Year 7 – 11 pupils travel to Huntingdon. The majority of secondary school age children attend Hinchingbrooke. St. Peters and the new secondary school that will be built as part of the Alconbury Weald development are the only two other state secondary schools within a five-mile radius. Some secondary pupils travel to Peterborough, Kimbolton or Cambridge to access religious or private (fee paying) schools. A recent survey indicated that parents would prefer to see school pupils travel less distance<sup>51</sup>.
- 7.15** Hinchingbrooke and St Peter's have sixth forms and, along with Huntingdon, Cambridge and Peterborough Regional Colleges provide a range of post-16 qualifications. In Godmanchester, the College of Animal Welfare and Stage Stars also offer post -16 vocational qualifications.
- 7.16** It would promote health and reduce traffic congestion if there are good and safe walking and cycling routes to all our education sites.
- 7.17** It will be important to see public transport routes made available to enable school pupils and college students to access education sites in time for registration each day, as well as to make the return journey home. It would promote more post-16 access if routes beyond the Town were connected and travel cards enabled for single ticket discounted journeys.

### ***Policy GMC20: Provision of education facilities for residents***

*We would support proposals that improve the availability and accessibility of education facilities in Godmanchester, where they are identified and needed, and are or the benefit of Godmanchester residents.*

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<sup>51</sup> Godmanchester Academy Trust Parental Survey 2016

## Helping Local Businesses Thrive

- 7.18** In a small town such as Godmanchester with a limited employment base, the local businesses are an important part of the community infrastructure. They provide the services that support the population; without them there would be more journeys to Huntingdon and other surrounding areas, putting more pressure on the already stretched transport network.
- 7.19** Our priority is the support of businesses which provide local services and employment.

## Providing for the Needs of New and Existing Businesses

- 7.20** One of the key themes in the NPPF is supporting a prosperous rural economy. Paragraph 28 states that, "Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development."
- 7.21** There are over 33 listed businesses within the parish which does not include those working as sole traders. Over the plan period, it is considered vital to support local services and businesses in order that they may create employment opportunities for residents and local people.
- 7.22** In 2011 over 8% of the economically active population of Godmanchester parish was self-employed without employees, above the district average. In particular in a rural location it is considered most appropriate to encourage small scale businesses which develop and promote tourism and rural enterprise generally and/or benefit the local community. Many of these businesses will be start-ups and for these people, having access to low-cost premises on flexible terms is of paramount importance. The provision of such flexible space within the parish will therefore be supported.
- 7.23** The Romans' Edge mixed use development is required to deliver approximately five hectares of B-class employment land. This therefore represents a significant opportunity to provide appropriate accommodation.
- 7.24** Godmanchester is home to the Wood Green Animal Shelter at Kings Bush. This site houses a large number of cats and dogs, as well as other domesticated animals and pets. The location away from other settlements is key to its being able to operate safely. It also has a large arena space, outdoor spaces, conference rooms and catering facilities including a public restaurant. Its location on the A1198 does enable easy road access but the exit from the site is not ideal given that the speed of vehicles on this section of the road and is more congested than when the shelter was first established. The A1198 has no footpath or cycle way to the site and the nature of the trunk road makes any access other than by car very unsafe.

- 7.25** It is vital for the economic success of our community, as for residents' amenity, that there are good telephone services and high speed broadband services. Until 2017 we still had two parts of the Town with no fast broadband on offer as the infrastructure had either not be installed or it had not been connected.

**Policy GMC21: Growing new capacity for small scale businesses in the Town**

*Development proposals to provide small-scale<sup>52</sup> and "Micro-Business"<sup>53</sup> A2<sup>54</sup>, B1<sup>55</sup> and D2<sup>56</sup> -class employment opportunities will generally be supported, in particular start-up space on flexible terms. This could either be through the following:*

- conversion of existing buildings across the Neighbourhood Plan area, subject to the impact of provision on the highway network and parking; or*
- provision of new buildings or conversion of existing buildings within or adjoining the Settlement Boundary of the Town.*

*Any such use will need to ensure that its impact on light, noise and air is acceptable and delivery, customer and employee access arrangements do not impact on public or neighbour amenity.*

*There will be a strong presumption against the loss of commercial premises or land which provides employment or future potential employment opportunities. Outside of permitted development rights, applications for a change of use to an activity that does not provide employment opportunities will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:*

- the commercial premises or land in question has not been in active use for at least 12 months; and*
- the commercial premises or land in question has no potential for either reoccupation or redevelopment for employment generating uses and as demonstrated through the results both of a full valuation report and a marketing campaign lasting for a continuous period of at least six months.*
- All new development must have good telephone services and high speed broadband services provided.*

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<sup>52</sup> With a floor space of about 150 – 200m<sup>2</sup>

<sup>53</sup> EU definition of a Micro-Business = less than 10 employees & turnover under £2 million

<sup>54</sup> A2 Shops - Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, undertakers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices, pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shops, dry cleaners, funeral directors and internet cafes.

<sup>55</sup> B1 Business - Offices (other than those that fall within A2), research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area.

<sup>56</sup> D2 Assembly and leisure - Cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not night clubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations (except for motor sports, or where firearms are used).

## **8 Getting Around**

**8.1** Godmanchester is a growing community. Transport and traffic are major concerns for residents and must be addressed in and through the future planning of the Town. The vision is to:

- make the roads in the Town safer by reducing vehicle speeds and minimising traffic congestion;
- improve sustainable travel in the Town by: making the Town safer for cyclists; developing a coherent network of cycle routes; improving physical access for pedestrians;
- ensuring there is a reliable, connected bus service that meet the needs of residents;
- manage parking better in the Town.

**8.2** With the anticipated improvements to the A14 road in Huntingdonshire and the levels of growth planned across Godmanchester it will be important that developments each contribute towards addressing the needs of the Town. By helping to develop a coherent and cohesive transport system incorporating more sustainable transport measures and enabling people to get around more easily and safely, we should also be able to protect the historic and natural environment.

**8.3** Cambridge County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP3) 2015 and the Huntingdon and Godmanchester Market Town Transport Strategy seek to widen the choices available for environmentally sustainable transport, and manage the demand for transport, particularly private car use. All planning applications for development which would generate significant amounts of movement should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment, identifying the specific impacts of their proposals on the local transport network, and the measures needed to mitigate any adverse impacts. Measures should maximise opportunities for more sustainable transport e.g. promoting pedestrian and cycling, and improving public transport services. Travel Plans should be provided for all developments which would generate significant new movements.

## Making the Roads in the Town Safer

- 8.4** The Town of Godmanchester routinely suffers from traffic issues associated with its proximity to Huntingdon (i.e. through traffic) and experiences congestion at peak times associated with its proximity to the A14 and its connectivity to the A1198, A428 and A1<sup>57</sup>.
- 8.5** Whilst Godmanchester is a small town it has a high proportion of residents who commute for employment. The public transport services are not comparable to larger towns and cities in terms of frequency and coverage, so that many people are primarily cars users (52% of commuters' journeys are made by car against 5% by bus or train<sup>58</sup>). The Romans' Edge housing development will see the population of the Town grow by 25% putting, potentially, a significant strain on the road network. The transport assessment and travel plan accompanying the planning permission (ref: 1200685OUT) are required to address this matter.
- 8.6** The Town has a number of businesses that receive deliveries from 7.5-ton vehicles. Part of the Town is marked as being restricted to these vehicles except for access. For the most part, vehicles delivering to Town businesses obey the limit restrictions. However, there is an increasing number of vehicles passing through the Town, without making deliveries, that are ignoring the restrictions. This includes an increasing number of articulated lorries attempting to use the weight restricted<sup>59</sup> weak Medieval Bridge to cross the river.<sup>60</sup>
- 8.7** In addition the local roads are routinely used by buses, coaches, emergency services and agricultural vehicles as a through route to the A14 and other settlements. Future impacts of the new A14 and the de-trunking of the old A14 are unclear.
- 8.8** Speeding traffic is a well-known problem in Godmanchester. In 2015 the Police collected speed data which showed drivers in Post Street and The Avenue travelling at excessive speeds<sup>61</sup>. Monitoring of traffic has also taken place on London Road and West Street. The Police have undertaken ad-hoc enforcement activity relating to speeding in the Town.

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<sup>57</sup> Whilst the A428 and A1 are outside of the parish they do have a direct impact on traffic through the Town as traffic diverts to continue its journey beyond Godmanchester.

<sup>58</sup> Source: 2011 Census

<sup>59</sup> Limited to 7.5 tonnes as "weak bridge"

<sup>60</sup> Emergency and public service vehicles, such as buses, are exempt from this restriction.

<sup>61</sup> Report to Town Council: Cambridgeshire Police (Traffic) put in monitoring strips on the Avenue (near the traffic lights) for a week in late January 2015. The data shows that whilst some speeds were within the limits, there were many cars exceeding the speed limit including some where speeds exceeded the limit by an extra 20 mph. One vehicle reached 71mph in a 30mph limit.

**8.9** Design changes to layouts that reduce the speed of traffic in and through the Town are welcomed<sup>62</sup>. There is an aspiration that a 20mph speed limit could be introduced for the historic core.

**8.10** The Town suffers from severe congestion at peak times. This causes concern for residents in terms of pollution, ease of access and enjoyment of the Town. It will be important that solutions are sought to reduce existing issues and that new developments do not make things worse.



**8.11** Godmanchester can become gridlocked when other trunk roads<sup>63</sup> are overloaded or blocked/shut. There is increasingly a justification to find a way of routing any diverted traffic away from residential areas when these situations arise.

**8.12** On-street parking adds to the congestion at times. Traffic must negotiate pinch points caused by parked or loading vehicles and queues quickly form as the oncoming traffic is a relentless flow at peak times, offering little opportunity to pass. By reducing some of the on-street parking or managing its location better it may be possible to improve traffic flow.

**8.13** Cambridgeshire County Council's Long Term Transport Strategy and their Huntingdon and Godmanchester Market Town Strategy confirm these issues

***Policy GMC22: Reducing traffic and congestion on Godmanchester's roads***

***Development proposals must demonstrate that they will not have a significant cumulative impact on the transport network. Where necessary, a transport assessment should accompany any planning application and traffic calming, improvements to public transport, cycling and walking routes, vehicle and cycle parking and other measures delivered which mitigate the impact of development, particularly through the 'historic core'. Where appropriate, a Travel Plan will be required, setting out how any adverse effects will be overcome, including through the promotion of use of more sustainable travel modes.***

<sup>62</sup> It is expected that the Town may make use of the "A14 Legacy Fund" to mitigate some of the A14 impacts.

<sup>63</sup> Including the A428, A1, A1198 and A14

## Make the Town Safer for Cyclists

- 8.14** Godmanchester is a small town within 3 miles of the centre of Huntingdon, and within the relatively flat countryside of Cambridgeshire. It represents a highly suitable environment for cycling for people living and working locally, and for tourists and visitors. Currently 4% of commuter journeys are taken by bicycle (above the district and national averages) so it is important that this base is built on, particularly given the close proximity of a wide range of services in Godmanchester and Huntingdon. Cycling should be easily accessible, made safer and encouraged.
- 8.15** A significant proportion of secondary school children cycle or walk to Hinchingsbrook School. The shared cycle route along the Avenue and around the Huntingdon ring road is key to this access. However, there are problems with how pupils on cycles arrive at the route as it does not connect with the whole Town. Pupils (and their families) are intimidated by the volume of traffic, speeds of vehicles and parked vehicles on the highway and, as a result, cycle on pedestrian footpaths before arriving at the shared footpath section. Whilst they may make cyclists safer, it raises safety concerns for pedestrians. It is vital that the roads are made much safer so that cyclists feel able to use them and not the footpaths, or to provide new cycle routes/shared footpath alternatives to connect the Town and protect cyclists.
- 8.16** A particularly troublesome area highlighted is Post Street, from the Chinese Bridge to the Medieval Bridge into Huntingdon. This is already highlighted in County Council's Medium Term Transport Strategy<sup>64</sup>
- 8.17** There are also concerns about the new Romans' Edge development having suitable routes for cycling to enable the safe crossing of the A1198, through the Town, and on to Huntingdon. Residents would like to see a suitable cycle crossing from Romans' Edge across the A1198, which ideally would not disrupt traffic flow, rather than the ground level crossings provided.
- 8.18** The footbridge over the River at Huntingdon causes a number of issues with cyclists not dismounting: there are routinely collisions between mounted cyclist and pedestrians. There is a pinch point and blind corner beside the Old Bridge Hotel which mean cyclists and pedestrians cannot see each other and have little space to pass each other. Cyclists, often secondary school pupils, resort to using the Medieval Bridge but do so with little care and attention, diverting from the carriage way onto the pedestrian island at speed and often against the flow of traffic. A dedicated cycle route over the River would be welcomed by cyclists.

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<sup>64</sup> ...'traffic calming measures for Post Street and The Causeway' and 'Investigate feasibility for public realm improvements before delivery of the A14 scheme to encourage additional usage of Post Street by pedestrians and cyclists. More comprehensive schemes may be achievable after successful delivery of the A14 scheme, which may include, in the long term, discussions over closure of Godmanchester Town Bridge after due consultation with affected residents' Huntingdon and Godmanchester Market Town Transport Strategy,



- 8.19** Householders who have doors opening straight onto the footpath are often faced with cyclists passing at some speed, which increase the risk of accidents. Shared footpath-cycle ways are not seen as being wholly successful, especially at school travel times. Residents feel there should be more cycle paths and safety measures to separate cyclists from the traffic flow as much as possible.
- 8.20** The link to the Ouse Valley Way is used by many cyclists from the Town for pleasure and to access employment in St. Ives. Leisure cyclists also use this route to visit the Town or to travel through it. Whilst cycle routes are marked, cyclists routinely report they do not think the markings are clear to them, or to pedestrians.
- 8.21** The Woodgreen Animal Shelter is part of the parish but with no off-road cycle route, or footpath, to link it to the Town it is rather disconnected and remains only safely accessible by vehicle. It is important that this connectivity is addressed.<sup>65</sup>
- 8.22** Work has previously been undertaken by Sustrans and Cambridgeshire County Council<sup>66</sup> to look at cycle route options along Post Street. It was decided that the volume of traffic and on-street parking made this scheme undeliverable. If the A14 changes reduce traffic then it is hoped that similar scheme can be explored to provide a better route for cyclists along this road.
- 8.23** Increasing the number and coherence of safe cycling routes in the Town would encourage more people to leave their cars at home and to cycle as well as reducing the congestion of bikes and cars fighting for road space. A map of current routes is in the Maps Section.
- 8.24** There are several cycle parking racks around the Town but these are insufficient to meet demand. A lack of safe cycle parking does not encourage cyclist to visit the Town nor does it encourage residents to use their bike to access local services and amenities.

***Policy GMC23: Improving cycling in Godmanchester***

*Development proposals that contribute to improvement of the network of cycle routes in the Town, or access to them, will be strongly supported. This includes the provision of safe crossing of roads for cyclists.*

*Development proposals to provide covered public cycle parking will be supported.*

<sup>65</sup> Cambridgeshire County Council's Huntingdon and Godmanchester Market Town Strategy 2016

<sup>66</sup> Cambridgeshire County Council and Sustrans schemes proposed between 2004 and 2006

## Ensure Appropriate Public Transport Service to the Town

- 8.25** Godmanchester is in close proximity to the transport services that centre on Huntingdon, with bus, coach and train services all originating from Huntingdon.
- 8.26** Godmanchester is currently served by two circular buses, the 476 and 477, and a bus service which stops on route to Camborne and Cambridge, the X3 service. Other services are accessed via the Huntingdon Bus Station. However, the provision is patchy in terms of destinations that can be easily accessed. Some of the buses/coaches do not access workplace destinations or the railway station at appropriate times for commuter use.
- 8.27** Whilst bus and coach services are constantly being updated, they rarely offer easy access to local services from Godmanchester, including hospitals and schools, and where they do the local traffic congestion makes them a unreliable choice for those needing to arrive for a specific time. This means they are not a choice for travel for many. It is important that all areas of the Town have access to services and that these are reliable.
- 8.28** Many residents make use of the train, the close proximity of Huntingdon Station making this an attractive option for travelling to work. Connections accessed from the hubs of Peterborough, Stevenage and Hitchin allow for easy access to other parts of the wider rail network. Rail services from Huntingdon provide for a large number of London commuters who travel daily. Trains from Huntingdon enable: pupils to travel to schools and colleges in Peterborough; shoppers to access St Neots, Peterborough and London; and for local residents to access to a wide variety of leisure and recreation activities in the region and beyond. Whilst bus services are on offer for commuters many chose their cars to ensure connections can be made. There are increasing numbers who walk or cycle to the station.

<b><i>Policy GMC24: encouraging greater take up and provision of public transport</i></b>
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<i>Proposals to improve sustainable transport ( public and community bus and coach services), including their connectivity with each other and with rail services, will be strongly supported. This may also include the provision of bus gates, laybys, 'real-time' information and shelters.</i>
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## Improve Physical Access for Pedestrians

- 8.29** The Godmanchester Neighbourhood Plan consultations regarding walking in the Town concluded that walking should be encouraged as much as possible for pleasure and for practical needs. Walking is a cheap and easy way to remain fit and healthy and encourages residents to leave their cars at home. Being able to walk to services and community facilities enables the community to be sustainably connected and helps to support a strong community feel.
- 8.30** Godmanchester residents are keen to see pavements being maintained, especially the link into Huntingdon, which is a popular route. Many footpaths in the Town are in a poor condition. Some pedestrian crossings suffer from standing water after rainfall making them difficult to use. Some of the leisure footpaths, including the Cow Lane section of the Ouse Valley Way, are in urgent need of attention. Residents are concerned about possible lack of lighting in some areas of Godmanchester including the parks, making these areas inaccessible at night.
- 8.31** Public Rights of Way are an important part of the transport network and need to be considered at an early stage of any development proposals. This will ensure that the needs of both the existing community and any future residents or businesses can be met in accordance with the County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.<sup>67</sup>
- 8.32** Because of the limited amount of parking in Godmanchester, pavements often have vehicles parked partially or wholly on the pedestrian surface or blocking access to dropped kerbs which prevent them from functioning as they were designed to.
- 8.33** Equally, shared cycle paths/footpaths are challenging to use, with near misses for both types of user. It is important that more segregated paths are developed.
- 8.34** Ice can be an issue, especially on the sloping footbridge that crosses the Ouse beside the medieval bridge. As pedestrian and cycle routes are no longer gritted the provision of grit bins is becoming increasingly important to enable users to grit as required to ensure walking and cycling routes stay open and safe.

### ***Policy GMC25: making it easier to get about on foot in Godmanchester***

*To ensure that residents can walk safely to the historic core, public transport facilities, schools and other important facilities serving Godmanchester town, all new developments should ensure safe pedestrian access to link up with existing footways that, in turn, directly serve the Walkway Routes<sup>68</sup>. Development will not have an unacceptable impact on Walkway Routes, and provide a strategy to mitigate the impact of additional traffic movements on the safety and flow of pedestrian access. Proposals to enhance the identified Walkways will be strongly supported. Where possible, footpaths should be clearly delineated to separate them from roads and cycle paths. They should be constructed from hard-wearing materials and designed to be easy to maintain over time.*

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<sup>67</sup> Cambridgeshire County Council Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan

<sup>68</sup> See Appendix 4

## 9 Community Suggestions

This section reflects suggestions made by individuals and groups throughout the development of this Plan which we could not make into planning policies but which we did not want to lose as they are important to residents. It should be noted that this is not an agreed work plan. It is included here so that the Town Council, and others, can consider them as part of their work going forward.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>To be considered</b>	<b>Which organisation might be best placed to lead or partner</b>
<b>Traffic</b>	Reduce traffic	CCC Highways
	Consider options to reduce traffic: i.e. one-way system to alleviate congestion; close bridge	CCC Highways
	Consider options to reduce rat runs	CCC Highways
<b>Speeding</b>	Stop vehicles speeding	Police
	Consider reducing speed limits, including to 20mph in centre	CCC Highways and Police
<b>Parking</b>	Stop vehicles parking on pavements and on yellow lines- some of it is dangerous	Police
	More off-road parking is needed - consider what is possible	CCC Highways and Town Council
	Stop people parking on grass verges / green spaces	HDC, CCC Highways, Police
	Consider making existing parking work harder by introducing time limits	CCC Highways
<b>Roads</b>	In poor state of repair including lots of potholes	CCC Highways
<b>Housing</b>	More new housing that is cheaper to buy	HDC, The Local Enterprise partnership and the private sector
	More bungalows and one bedroom homes	HDC, The Local Enterprise partnership and the private sector
	When new houses are built (Roman's Edge), ensure we become one community - including the provision of welcome packs and street wardens	HDC, Town Council
<b>Bus Services</b>	Reliability of service and loss of part of route / some parts of the Town with little	Whippet Buses and CCC Passenger Transport Services

	or no service	
	Seek to improve local service to villages, hospital, train station, market towns and Cambridge	Whippet Buses and CCC Passenger Transport Services
<b>Cycling</b>	Consider a cycle route along the Causeway and Post Street, to Wood Green and to join up with other routes	CCC Highways
	Consider reducing speed and traffic to make cycling on the roads safer	Police and CCC Highways
	Stop cyclists on pavements	Police
	Consider adding more segregated cycle paths	HDC, CCC, Town Council
	Consider a new route along old railway line	HDC, CCC, Town Council
<b>Community Events</b>	More events as they make us a "community"	Community Association and Town Council
	More volunteers	Everyone, Town Council, Community Association
<b>Play Equipment</b>	More play areas and more play equipment, including more for teenagers - look at options	Town Council
	Skate park - look at options	Town Council
	More benches at play parks - look at options	Town Council
<b>Sports</b>	More sports on offer in the Town - tennis courts, sports centre, volley ball, archery, running track, indoor football and year round playing surfaces - see what is possible	HDC, Town Council and sports clubs and associations
	Sports changing rooms - see what is possible	Town Council
<b>River</b>	Encourage more boating opportunities, e.g. canoeing, kayaking	HDC, Town Council and local sports organisations and clubs
	Encourage better moorings and landing stages for boats	HDC, Environment Agency, Town Council
	Make more use of the river frontage: a boardwalk over the river, more cafes etc	Town Council, Environment Agency
	Reduce weed in river	Environment Agency
	Consider a fountain in Mill Lade / floating	Environment Agency

	pontoons	
<b>Shops</b>	A better range of local shops, including more shops for younger people and more to attract visitors	Town Council, HDC, private sector, Businesses In Godmanchester
<b>Tourism</b>	A Town map	Town Council
<b>Paths and pavements</b>	Many need resurfaced as they are uneven	CCC Highways
<b>Community Facilities</b>	Consider outside toilets at Judith's Field	Town Council
	Keep public buildings available for use, like Judith's Field and the Queen Elizabeth School	Town Council
	More places for young people to go	Town Council, HDC and private sector
	We need a community centre, more community use rooms	Town Council, HDC, business in Godmanchester
	Indoor play spaces	Local businesses
	Community cinema and music venue	Town Council
	Access to banking service in Godmanchester	Local banks, Post Office
	Keep the Plant Nursery	HDC, Town Council
	Water features in our green spaces, with seating	Town Council
<b>Community Safety</b>	More obvious and more frequent police presence	Police
	More CCTV	HDC, Town Council
	Better road crossings	CCC Highways
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Sort out drainage issues where they overflow	HDC, Highways, Anglian Water
<b>Dog Fouling</b>	Stop dog fouling on pavements	HDC
<b>Improvements</b>	Make the Mill Steps better	Town Council, HDC, Environment Agency, CCC
	Improve fencing in and around the Town where it is broken	Highways England, CCC Highways, HDC, Town Council, private landowners
	Remove old, unnecessary signage etc	CCC Highways, Highways England,
	Remove pigeons under A14 bridge (Cambridge Road) and keep it clean until then	Highways England, HDC

	Redevelop derelict sites e.g. Tyrells Marina	HDC, Town Council
	Consider relocation some rubbish bins and get others, which are rusting, replaced	HDC, Town Council
	More green spaces	HDC, Town Council
<b>Weeds</b>	Remove weeds more often and tidy overgrown areas	CCC, HDC, Town Council, Godmanchester in Bloom, volunteers,
<b>Grass Cutting</b>	Verges and green spaces need cut more often	HDC, Town Council, Godmanchester in Bloom, volunteers
<b>Education</b>	More school places and a secondary school	CCC Education
<b>Trees</b>	Plant more trees	HDC, Town Council, Godmanchester in Bloom, householders
<b>Health</b>	Another Doctors' surgery, with more parking	NHS, GP
	A dentist in Godmanchester	NHS
<b>Wildlife</b>	More habitats made available	HDC, Town Council and nature organisations
	New Neolithic Park on old Landfill	HDC, CCC, SITA, Godmanchester in Bloom
<b>Museum and Heritage</b>	A permanent home for the museum	The Porch Museum, Town Council
	Walking routes to explore Town's history	The Porch Museum, Town Council
<b>Honours</b>	Some way of honouring those who have given exceptional service to our community	Town Council
<b>Antisocial behaviour</b>	More patrols to reduce antisocial behaviour	Police
	Stop overnight lorry parking as causes littering	Police, CCC Highways
<b>Litter</b>	Reduce littering on roads	HDC, Highways England, CCC Highways, volunteers
<b>Recreation</b>	More clubs and activities in the Town	Town Council, HDC
	Online directory of What's On	Town Council, Community Association
<b>Businesses</b>	Encourage more businesses	HDC, Town Council, Business in Godmanchester, Local Enterprise Partnership

## 10 Maps

### Settlement Boundary

The concept of settlement boundaries is to draw a policy line which separates built-up areas (within which development is, in principle, acceptable), from the countryside (within which, with limited exceptions, it is not). This is in conformity with the NPPF. Land within the settlement boundary may not be suitable for development due to other constraints, for example, flood risk zones, tree preservation orders, residential amenity, the protection of green space or townscape character.

In defining the settlement boundary for Godmanchester we have considered: current land and built form; land-use; landscape character; woodland cover; field pattern and settlement pattern using maps and aerial photographs. We have also considered: scale, enclosure and visual unity. We have made site visits and used local knowledge. The settlement boundary includes new development that has been allocated in the Core Strategy 2009 and in the HDC Draft Local Plan 2036.

Set out here is the methodology.

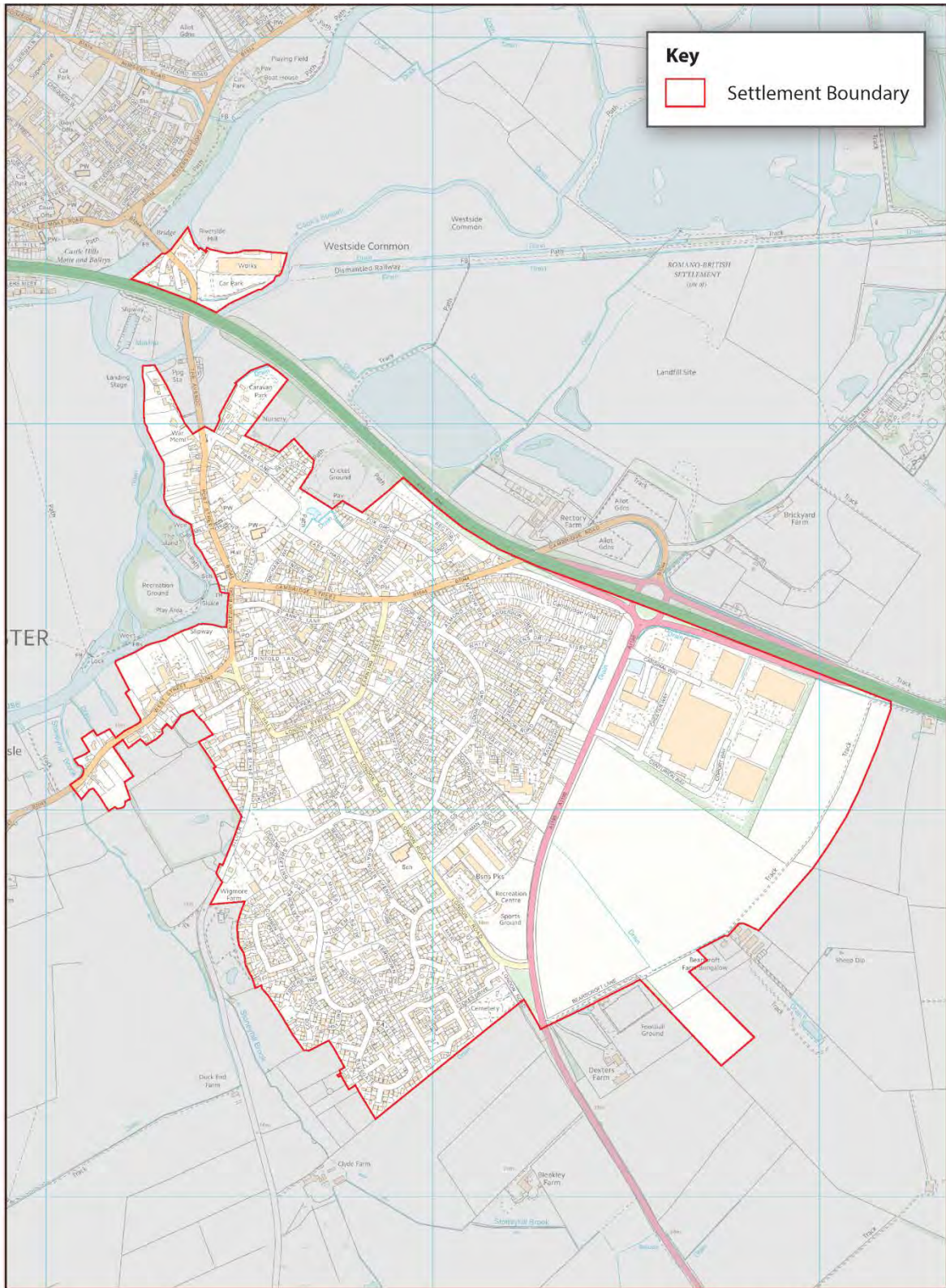
1.1 Guiding Principle	1.2 Implementation Notes
The built-up area boundary does not have to be continuous; any distinct group of 30 or more dwellings and their immediate surroundings may constitute a separate built up area within the parish.	Distinct areas of development may exist within the parish separated by areas of countryside. The remainder of the guiding principles provide advice on whether separate clusters of development constitute a separate built up area or are deemed to be isolated or sporadic development within the countryside.
The built-up area boundary will follow clearly defined physical features such as walls, fences, hedgerows, roads, field boundaries and property lines unless set out as exceptions below.	Where practical the built-up area boundary will include the whole curtilage of a property in recognition of the combined status of properties and their curtilages as a single planning unit. Exceptions are set out below for determining the boundary around extensive properties on the edge of the built-up area to reflect the difference in character between parts of the grounds closely related to the property, for instance containing garaging and tennis courts and that which has a more natural countryside character.
<b>1.3 The built-up area will include:</b>	
Residential, community, retail and employment buildings which are wholly encompassed by other buildings.	The majority of buildings within the built-up area boundary will fall within this category. It is included for the sake of completeness as most attention will be paid to determining where the edges of the built-up area are.
Existing commitments for residential,	Where development for residential,



community, retail and employment uses on sites which are physically/functionally related to the settlement.	community, retail or employment use has commenced or has outstanding planning permission the principle of development has been approved. The precise boundary around such sites should be determined with regard to the detailed guidance within this table. We have included sites already proposed in the emerging Local Plan to future proof this Neighbourhood Plan.
Greenfield land which is predominantly encompassed by and integral to the built-up area and defined by strong boundary features.	Some greenfield uses such as recreational or amenity open space, churchyards, wide grass verges and allotments, can form an integral and valuable part of the built-up area and its character. Typically, these should have buildings on at least three sides and have a clear physical and visual relationship with the built-up area rather than any adjoining countryside.
<b>1.4 The built-up area will exclude:</b>	
Open spaces and sports and recreational facilities, paddocks, allotments, caravan sites, churchyards and cemeteries which extend into the countryside or primarily relate to the countryside in form or character.	Areas of open space, sports and recreational facilities, paddocks, allotments, caravan sites, churchyards and cemeteries provide a visual buffer between the built form and the open countryside, softening the visual impact and linking the built-up area with its rural context. Such land is generally considered to primarily relate to the countryside where it is encompassed by built development on two sides or less.
Isolated properties and areas of ribbon and fragmented development which are physically or visually detached from the main built form.	To avoid areas of intervening countryside being unnecessarily included within the built-up area properties which are physically or visually detached should be excluded.
Farmyards and associated agricultural buildings which extend into the countryside or primarily relate to the countryside in form or character.	Agricultural buildings tend to relate more to the surrounding countryside when still in use for agricultural purposes. However, if the building comprises a long standing traditionally built building and is well related in terms of scale and positioning to eligible properties with a defensible boundary it may be included as it is likely to be deemed suitable for reuse under permitted development rights.
Sections of large curtilages of buildings which relate more to the character of the countryside than the built form.	Large curtilages with grounds stretching away from the rest of the built-up area are excluded to prevent sub-division of the plot for new development and protect any vegetation which is likely to shield views

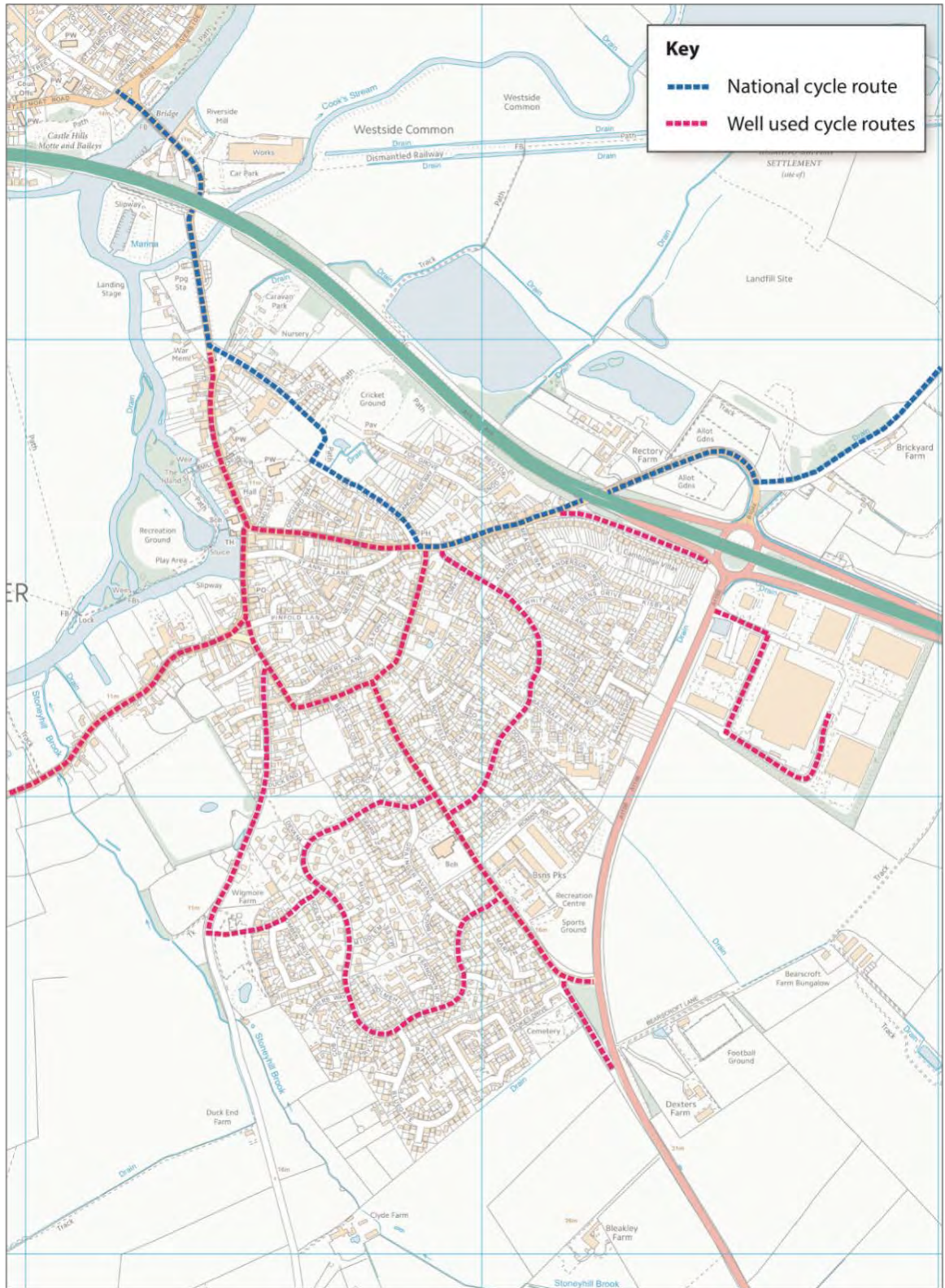
	<p>into the plot from the public domain. Where practical the built-up area boundary will be drawn along physical features such as hedges and fences which sub-divide elements of the grounds that relate closely to the buildings, for instance formal gardens and ancillary parking from those with a more natural, rural character. Where no clear boundary features exist the built-up area boundary will be drawn 15 m behind the relevant wall to allow scope for minor alterations and extensions to the property.</p>
<p>Fingers of agricultural land, woodland, meadow, areas of water and natural habitats that penetrate the built form but primarily relate to the countryside in form or character.</p>	<p>These spaces can provide a visual buffer between built development and the open countryside, softening the visual impact and linking the built-up area with its rural context.</p>

# Settlement Boundary Map



Based on The Ordnance Survey Mapping. (C) Crown Copyright.

# Cycle Routes Map



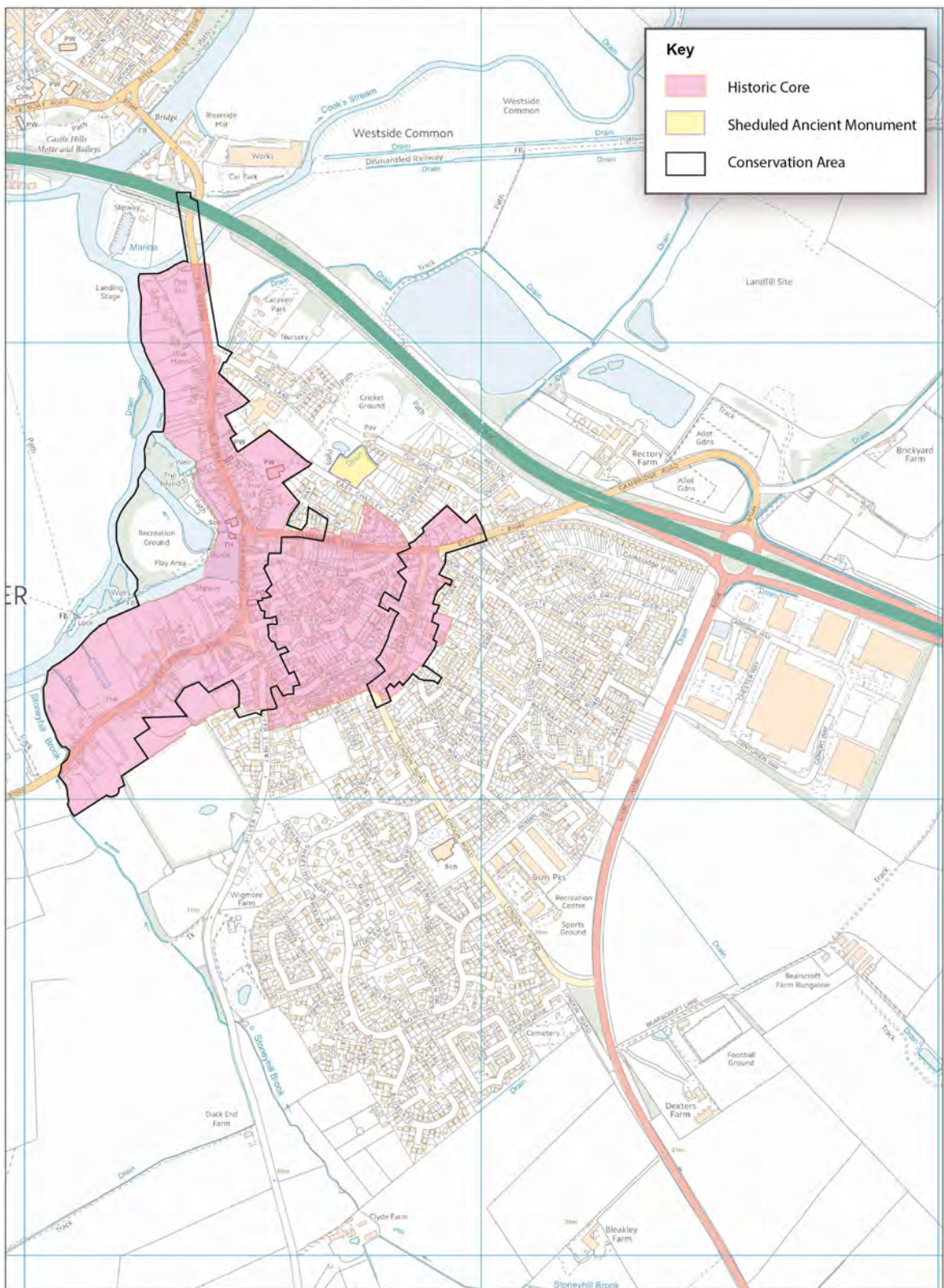
Based on The Ordnance Survey Mapping. (C) Crown Copyright.

# Walkway Routes Map



Based on The Ordnance Survey Mapping. (C) Crown Copyright.

# Historic Core Map



Based on The Ordnance Survey Mapping. (C) Crown Copyright.

## Appendix 1 – Green Spaces

### Green Spaces in Godmanchester:

This list is made up of Designated Sites, Local Green Spaces and Other Green Spaces which are of value to the community. Please note that spaces marked with an asterisk are where landowners have yet to give their consent to the proposed designation. Maps showing all Green Spaces are shown below.

#### Designated Sites

1. Portholme Meadow SAC<sup>69</sup> and SSSI<sup>70</sup><sup>71</sup>
2. Eastside Common SSSI<sup>72</sup>
3. Westside Common<sup>73</sup>

#### Local Green Spaces

These are defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states: The Local Green Space designation...should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  - where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife; and
  - where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
4. **The Cricket Pitch.** Special to the local community due to: its importance as a recreation space in the heart of the Town. It is the only green flat open area not prone to flooding large enough to host a cricket pitch.
  5. **The Green between Cob Place and Fishers Way:** Special to the local community due to: its importance as a recreation space and for providing views through to open countryside ensuring that this development maintained its connectivity to the open countryside beyond.
  6. **The green amenity and play space between Devana Close, Sweetings Road and Duck end known locally as Devana Park.** Special to the local community due to: its importance as a recreation space in the Town. This land includes a community planted orchard.

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<sup>69</sup> SAC: Special Area for Conservation

<sup>70</sup> SSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest

<sup>71</sup> This is covered by the Brampton Parish Designated Neighbourhood Plan Area. It is not part of the Godmanchester Neighbourhood Plan is, therefore, not covered by its policies. However, given its significance to the Town in terms of amenity, and flooding, it is noted here.

<sup>72</sup> Designated as Common Land on the Commons Register

<sup>73</sup> Designated as Common Land on the Commons Register

7. **The green amenity space between Betts Close and Porch Close known locally as Buttermel.** Special to the local community due to: its importance as a recreation space in the Town retained as a quiet space.
8. **Judith's Field<sup>74</sup>** Special to the local community due to: its importance as a recreation and play space in the Town with a purpose-built community use recreation building.
9. **The garden on the site of the Methodist Chapel off Cambridge Street.** The site of the former Methodist Chapel this site is special to the local community as it is a sensory garden for quiet contemplation which recalls the sites for historic significance in the Town.
10. **The War Memorial and the open space adjacent to it between The Avenue and Park Lane.** This site is special to the community as its forms part of the War Memorial space where we gather to remember those recorded on the memorial and where they are community seats.
11. **The allotments either side of Cambridge Road\*** Special to the local community due to: its importance as a recreation/amenity space in the Town: these are the only allotments available for residents.
12. **The Football Ground at Bearscroft known locally as Rovers Football Ground.** Special to the local community due to: its importance as a recreation space in the Town: this is the only open space available for professional standard football in the Town. It also serves a wider football community.
13. **The Community Nursery (plant) off Park Lane.** This site is listed community asset and is well-used not only for providing a horticultural space but for providing an educational setting (schools and for post-16 years young people with additional and special needs). It has a strong group of supporters who enjoy its therapeutic benefits as well as the community and social events it offers. It's also a haven for wildlife and native species of flora and fauna, including a native species apple orchard and is an important "green lung" in over Town.

#### **Godmanchester's Other Green Spaces**

These are not defined within the NPPF but those listed here are mostly small scale public amenity, recreation and informal play spaces that are within the Parish and are important to the character of the Town, helping to provide a semi-rural feel. Many were allocated as public amenity spaces under planning consent for neighbouring properties.

14. The Godmanchester Nature Reserve at Cow Lane, part of which is also known as the Peter Prince Memorial Nature Reserve.
15. The Cow Lane gravel pits, Huntingdon by-pass borrow pit, West Meadow and Westside pollarded willows, including 'Teddy's Lake'\*.
16. The Recreation Ground including the green spaces leading up to the lock.

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<sup>74</sup> In Accordance with the lease to the Town Council



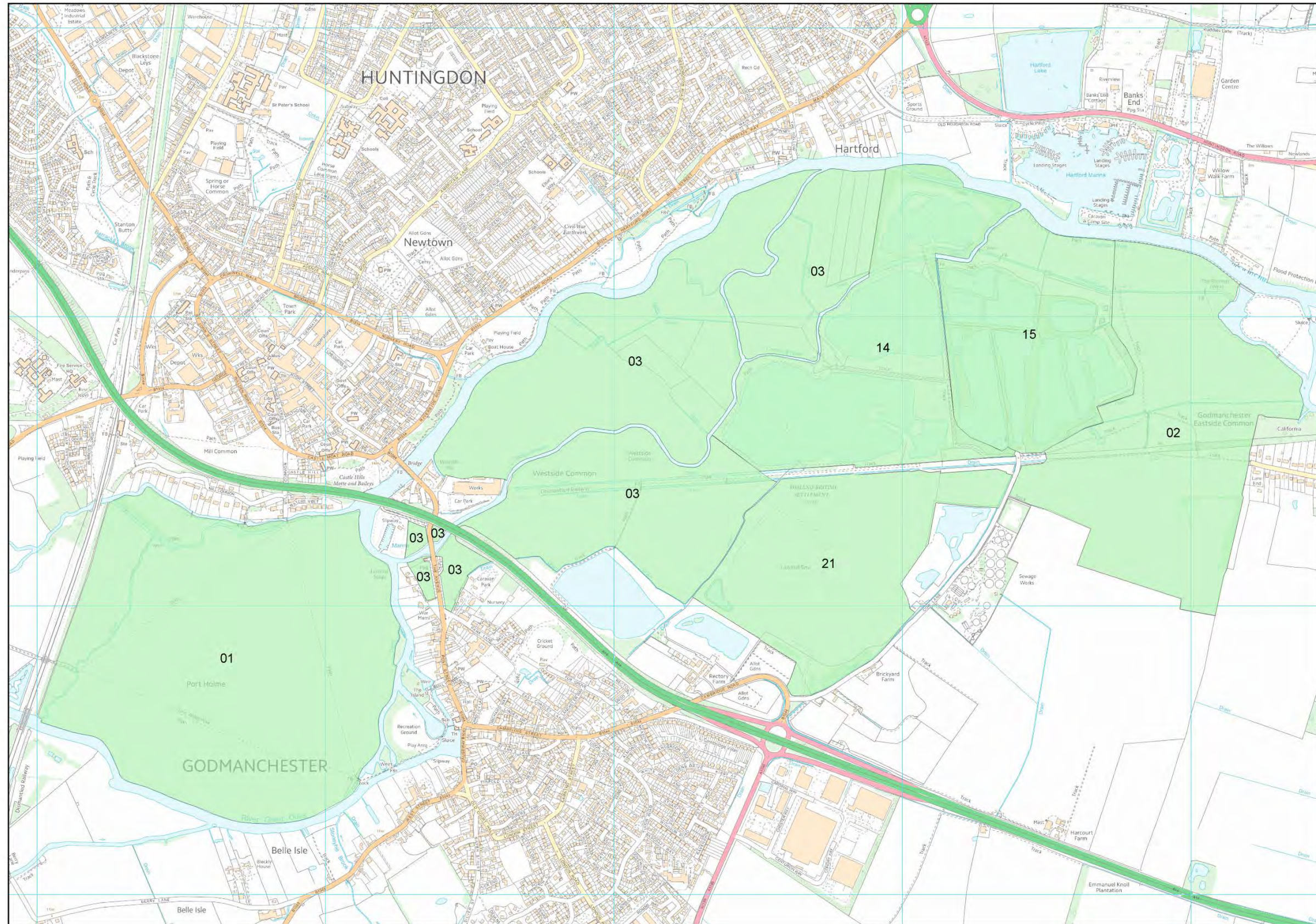
17. Queens Walk
18. The green space adjacent to the Cricket Pitch, alongside Pavilion Close. Special to the local community due to: its importance as a recreation space in the heart of the Town.
19. The land between the school, the Church and East Chadley Lane. Special to the local community due to: its importance as a recreation space in the heart of the Town. This land includes a community use pond.
20. The green amenity and play space adjacent to Jarwood Walk and up to Silver Street, known as Wigmore Meadow.
21. The proposed Neolithic Country Park\* former Neolithic Temple
22. Silver Street Nature Reserve
23. The green spaces along Bascraft Way:
24. The Green space along the bund between Roman Way and Lions Cross
25. The green walkways in Comben Drive
26. The green walkway between Ferndown and Brick Kilns\
27. The green walkway between Rushes Walk and Merton Walk
28. The Green at Earning Street adjacent to Pipers Lane
29. The extended verge on Pipers Lane
30. The extended verge in Sylton Close
31. The extended verge at the junction of Earning Street and Cambridge Road
32. The extended verges along London Road
33. The extended verges along The Avenue
34. The extended verges at the Windsor Road / Tudor Road junction
35. The extended verges along Ravenshoe
36. The extended verges between Hilsdens Drive and Anderson Crescent
37. The extended verges running in front of and between Cambridge Villas
38. The extended verges along Cambridge Road
39. The extended verge / green strip along Rectory Gardens
40. Extended Verges in Park Lane including where it meets Pavilion Close
41. The extended verges along and behind Centurion Way
42. The green walkway between Porch Close and London Road
43. The green at the Fox Grove, Lancaster Way junction
44. The Green at Pettit Road
45. The Green between Windsor Road and Ravenshoe
46. The Green between Tudor Road and Stuart Close
47. The green/play area at Roman Way
48. The green at Lions Cross\*
49. The Green between Ferndown, Holmehill and Middlemiss View
50. The Green in Brick Kilns
51. The Green at Croftfield
52. The Green at Peate Close

53. The Green on Tudor Road adjacent to Field Walk\*
54. The Green in Saxon Close\*
55. The land adjacent to the slipway at The Causeway\*
56. The Green in Granary Close\*
57. The Green at Martin Close\*
58. The wooded area opposite the lawn cemetery between London Road and the A1198\*
59. The green at Field Walk\*
60. The Green at Carnaby Close
61. The Green at Mowlands
62. The Green between Pettit Road and Kisby Avenue
63. The open amenity space in Rectory Gardens
64. The green and play space at Stokes Drive
65. The Green between Stokes Drive and Bayliss
66. The Green amenity spaces at Bearcroft Farm Housing Development / Romans' Edge<sup>75</sup>

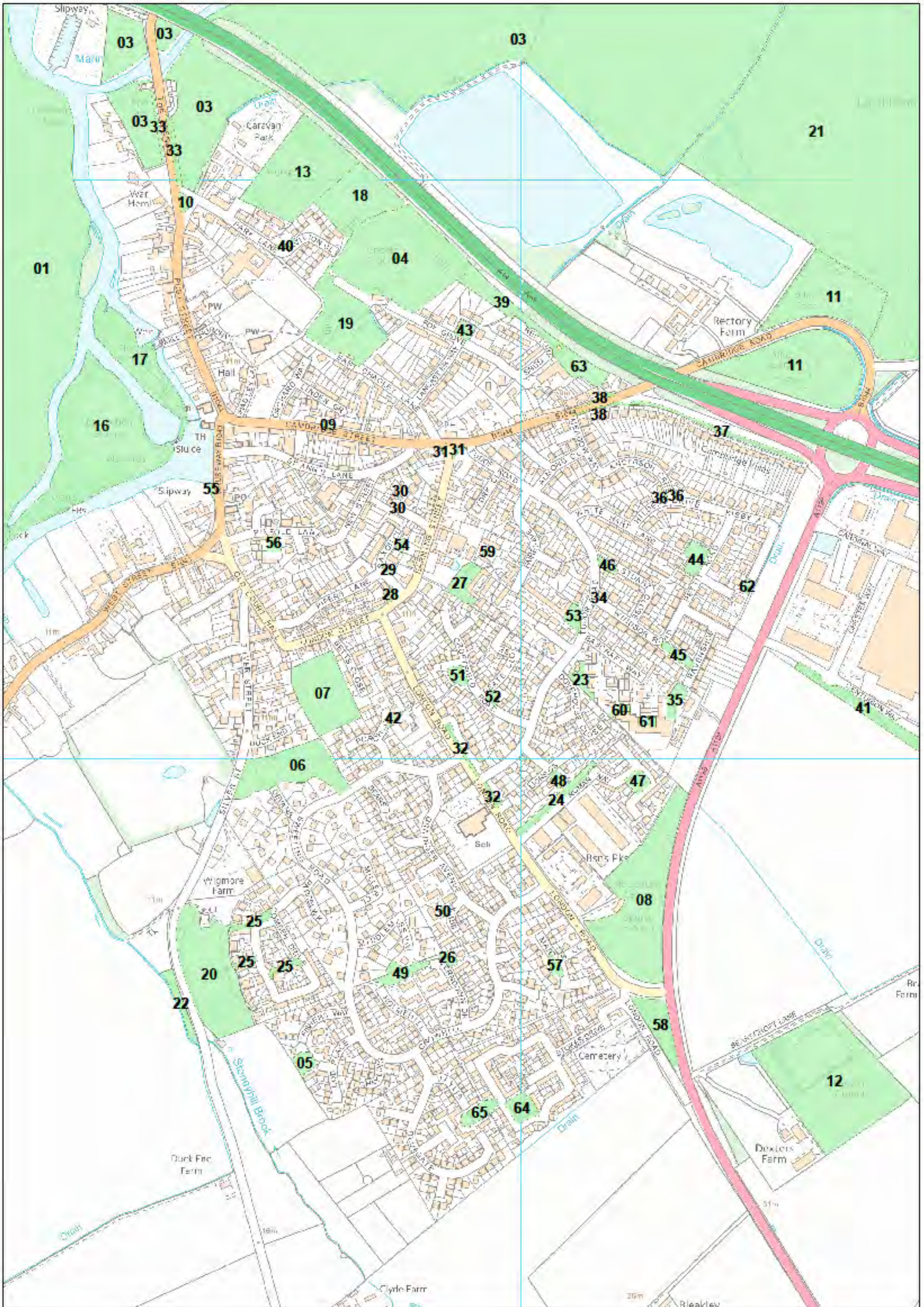
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<sup>75</sup> At the time of writing we do not have names for all of the locations already approved through planning applications.

Godmanchester green spaces – wider area



Godmanchester green spaces – town



## 11 Appendix 2 – Planning Policy - Housing

Existing Planning Policies as set out in Huntingdonshire, note the policy numbers in the emerging HDC Local Plan 2036 may change.

Issue	Existing/Emerging policy	Summary of policy
Quality of development and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Plan 2002, Policy HL5: The Quality and Density of Development.</li> <li>• Emerging Local Plan 2017, Policy LP 10: Design Context; Policy LP 11 Design Implementation; Policy LP 12 Strategic Placemaking.</li> </ul>	A high standard of design is required to create a strong sense of place. Reference should be made to the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD
Development within Conservation Areas/Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NPPF, paragraphs 128-140.</li> <li>• Local Plan 1995, Policies En5 (development affecting conservation areas) and En6 (high standard of design in conservation areas).</li> <li>• Emerging Local Plan 2017, Policy LP 34: Heritage Strategy; Policy LP 35 Heritage Assets and their Settings</li> </ul>	Development affecting conservation areas should preserve and enhance its character and appearance. Development should consider the significance of heritage assets and their setting.
Housing Mix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emerging Local Plan 2017, Policy LP 24: Housing Mix</li> </ul>	Development should provide the mix of size, type and tenure of housing required by evidence of housing need
Affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core Strategy 2009, Policy CS 4: Affordable Housing in Development.</li> <li>• Emerging Local Plan 2017, Policy LP 23: Affordable Housing Provision</li> </ul>	Requires a target of 40% of new homes on sites of 11 or more homes or 1,001m <sup>2</sup> residential floorspace or more to be delivered as affordable housing. This should meet the identified need in the district.
Space in new homes	This is addressed through minimum requirements in national Building Regulations.	Details are contained in: DCLG (2015) <i>Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard</i>
Delivering 'Lifetime Homes'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is addressed through minimum requirements in national Building Regulations.</li> <li>• Emerging Local Plan 2017, Policy LP 24: Housing Mix</li> </ul>	

## 12 APPENDIX 3 – LISTED BUILDINGS

Listed Buildings in Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire, England

<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/cambridgeshire/godmanchester><sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> To note, this list should include the new listing of 1 -11 Corpus Christi Lane which was added 25 Jan 2016 but has not been updated on the website.

## 13 APPENDIX 4 - WALKWAYS

Godmanchester has a number of walkways throughout the Town. These are:

- between Pavilion Close and East Chadley Lane
- between Pavilion Close and Fox Grove
- between Pavilion Close, across the cricket pitches, under the A14 and to join up with the route round the lake, across to Cooks Backwater, along Cooks backwater, along the Ouse to Houghton
- Cow Lane to Meadow Lane (Hemingford)
- Cow Lane to Cambridge Road
- Fox Grove to Rectory Gardens
- Besters Walk (Cambridge St to St Ann's Lane) to The Stiles (The Stiles to Pinfold Lane) to Pipers Lane
- Berry Lane to Brampton
- Silver Street to Comben Drive
- Silver Street to Devana Close
- Crowhill to Holmehill to Ferndown
- Holmehill to Ferndown
- Middlemiss View to Grainger Avenue
- Bayliss to Stokes Drive
- London Road to A1198 opposite Bearscroft Lane
- London Road, along Roman Way to Mowlands or Dovehouse Close
- Littlefield to Sears Close
- Porch Close to London Road
- London Road to Croftfield to Peate Close to Field Walk
- Earning Street to Field Walk to Tudor Road
- Lions Cross to Dovehouse Close
- Roman Way to Judith's Field
- Roman Way to Lions Cross or Dovehouse Close
- Field Walk to Fairy Avenue and Merton Walk
- The Close to Tudor Road
- White Hart Lane to Petit Road
- Petit Road to Kisby Avenue
- Ravenshoe to Ravenshoe
- Cambridge Villas to A1198 to Cardinal Park
- \*Romans Edge to Kisby Avenue
- \*Romans Edge to A1198 to London Road
- Romans Edge to A1198 to Cambridge Villas

