

Corby Glen Neighbourhood Development Plan 2023-2036

**A report to South Kesteven District Council on
the Corby Glen Neighbourhood Development
Plan**

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Executive Summary

- 1 I was appointed by South Kesteven District Council in June 2023 to carry out the independent examination of the Corby Glen Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 2 The examination was undertaken by written representations. I visited the neighbourhood area on 18 July 2023.
- 3 The Plan includes a range of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. There is a very clear focus on safeguarding its character and appearance. It proposes the designation of a series of local green spaces.
- 4 The Plan has been underpinned by community support and engagement. All sections of the community have been actively engaged in its preparation.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report, I have concluded that the Corby Glen Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.
- 6 I recommend that the referendum should be held within the neighbourhood area.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
17 October 2023

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Corby Glen Neighbourhood Development Plan 2023-2036 (the 'Plan').
- 1.2 The Plan has been submitted to South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) by Corby Glen Parish Council (CGPC) in its capacity as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They aim to allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 and its updates in 2018, 2019 and 2021. The NPPF continues to be the principal element of national planning policy.
- 1.4 The role of an independent examiner is clearly defined in the legislation. I have been appointed to examine whether the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions and Convention Rights and other statutory requirements. It is not within my remit to examine or to propose an alternative Plan, or a potentially more sustainable Plan except where this arises as a result of my recommended modifications to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions and the other relevant requirements.
- 1.5 A neighbourhood plan can be narrow or broad in scope. Any plan can include whatever range of policies it sees as appropriate to its designated neighbourhood area. The submitted Plan has been designed to be distinctive in general terms, and to be complementary to the development plan. It has a clear focus on maintaining the character and appearance of the neighbourhood area. It proposes the designation of a series of local green spaces.
- 1.6 Within the context set out above, this report assesses whether the Plan is legally compliant and meets the basic conditions that apply to neighbourhood plans. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends changes to its policies and supporting text.
- 1.7 This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome the Plan would then be used to determine planning applications within the neighbourhood area and will sit as part of the wider development plan.

2 The Role of the Independent Examiner

- 2.1 The examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted neighbourhood plan meets the relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 2.2 I was appointed by SKDC, with the consent of CGPC, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of both SKDC and CGPC. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.
- 2.3 I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I am a Director of Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited. In previous roles, I have 40 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level and more recently as an independent examiner. I am a chartered town planner and have significant experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service.

Examination Outcomes

- 2.4 In my role as the independent examiner of the Plan I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the examination:
- (a) that the Plan as submitted proceeds to a referendum; or
 - (b) that the Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
 - (c) that the Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 2.5 The outcome of the examination is set out in Sections 7 and 8 of this report.

Other examination matters

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

3 Procedural Matters

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

- the submitted Plan;
- the Basic Conditions Statement;
- the Consultation Statement;
- the SEA/HRA screening reports;
- the Evidence Document;
- the Description of Key Views;
- CGPC's responses to the clarification note;
- the representations made to the Plan;
- the adopted South Kesteven Local Plan;
- the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021);
- Planning Practice Guidance; and
- relevant Ministerial Statements.

3.2 I visited the neighbourhood area on 18 July 2023. I looked at its overall character and appearance and at those areas affected by policies in the Plan in particular. The visit is covered in more detail in Section 5 of this report.

3.3 It is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations made to the submitted Plan, I was satisfied that the Plan could be examined by written representations and without the need for a public hearing.

4 Consultation

Consultation Process

- 4.1 Policies in made neighbourhood plans become the basis for local planning and development control decisions. As such the regulations require neighbourhood plans to be supported and underpinned by public consultation.
- 4.2 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 CGPC prepared a Consultation Statement. The Statement sets out the mechanisms used to engage all concerned in the plan-making process. It also provides specific details about the consultation process that took place on the pre-submission version of the Plan (February to March 2022). It captures the key issues in a proportionate way and is then underpinned by more detailed appendices. It is a very good example of a Consultation Statement.
- 4.3 Section 3 of the Statement set out details of the comprehensive range of consultation events that were carried out in relation to the initial stages of the Plan.
- 4.4 Other sections of the report provide details about the various events. They include the feedback from the launch event (Section 5), the Household Survey (Section 6) and the informal events (Section 7).
- 4.5 Table A of the Statement provides specific details about the comments received from external agencies during the consultation process on the pre-submission version of the Plan. It identifies the principal changes that worked their way through into the submitted Plan. This process helps to describe the evolution of the Plan.
- 4.6 Consultation has been an important element of the Plan's production. Advice on the neighbourhood planning process has been made available to the community in a positive and direct way by those responsible for the Plan's preparation.
- 4.7 From all the evidence provided to me as part of the examination, I can see that the Plan has promoted an inclusive approach towards seeking the opinions of all concerned throughout the process. SKDC has carried out its own assessment that the consultation process has complied with the requirements of the Regulations.

Representations Received

- 4.8 Consultation on the submitted plan was undertaken by SKDC and ended on 12 June 2023. This exercise generated comments from the following organisations:
- NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board
 - National Highways
 - Historic England
 - Natural England
 - Canal and River Trust

- Environmental Agency
- National Gas
- National Grid
- Sports England
- Anglian Water
- South Kesteven District Council

4.9 A representation was also received from a resident. I have taken account of the various representations in examining the Plan. Where it is appropriate to do so, I make specific reference to the individual representations in Section 7 of this report.

5 The Neighbourhood Area and the Development Plan Context

The Neighbourhood Area

- 5.1 The neighbourhood area consists of the parish of Corby Glen. It sits in attractive countryside to the south and east of Grantham and between the A1 to the west and the A15 to the east. Its population in 2011 was 1017 persons living in 440 houses. It was designated as a neighbourhood area on 24 January 2018.
- 5.2 Corby Glen is an attractive village based around Market Place, High Street and Church Street. Its historic core was designated as a conservation area in 1984. The A151 runs to the south of the historic core of the village. The village has now expanded following the development of housing schemes outside of the conservation area including Barleycroft, Barn Owl Close, Coronation Road, Ferndale Close, Musson's Close, Pridmore Road, Adcock's close, Mill Road, St John's Road, Walsingham Drive and Willoughby Close. There are several important open spaces in Corby Glen. The Green lies on the north side of the A151 and is the site of the village war memorial. Part of The Green extends across Station Road and contains the Childrens' play park.
- 5.3 The other settlement in the parish is the hamlet of Birkholme approximately a mile to the west of Corby Glen on the A151. The remainder of the parish is the surrounding countryside. It has an undulating character, with a mixture of woods and farmland. It overlays Jurassic limestone, which has provided a ready source of building stone which was readily used in the older parts of the village.

Development Plan Context

- 5.4 The South Kesteven Local Plan was adopted in January 2020. Corby Glen is identified as one of a series of Larger Villages in the settlement hierarchy in Policy SP2 of the Local Plan.
- 5.5 Policy SP2 comments that in the Larger Villages development proposals which promote their role and function and will not compromise the settlement's nature and character, will be supported. The Local Plan includes a housing allocation for approximately 250 homes in Corby Glen (Policy LV-H5) at land at Swinstead Road/Bourne Road.
- 5.6 Other more general policies in the Local Plan have been particularly relevant in influencing and underpinning the various policies in the submitted Plan, including:

Policy SP3	Infill Development
Policy SP4	Development on the Edge of Settlements
Policy SP6	Community Services and Facilities
Policy E4	Protection of Existing Employment Sites
Policy E5	Expansion of Existing Businesses
Policy EN1	Landscape Character
Policy EN3	Green Infrastructure
Policy EN6	The Historic Environment

Policy DE1 Promoting Good Quality Design
 Policy OS1 Open Space

- 5.7 The Inspector's report on the current Local Plan commits SKDC to undertake an early review of the Local Plan from April 2020 with submission by the end of December 2023. The Local Development Scheme has been revised to ensure that the timetable for review of the Local Plan is realistic and achievable. On this basis the submission of the review of the Local Plan is now expected to be in Winter 2024/25. In these circumstances the submitted neighbourhood plan has not sought to take account of the emerging Local Plan review
- 5.8 In process terms, the timings involved have allowed the submitted neighbourhood plan directly to take account of the adopted Local Plan. In doing so it has relied on up-to-date information and research that has underpinned previous and existing planning policy documents in the District. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter.

Unaccompanied Visit

- 5.9 I visited the neighbourhood area on 18 July 2023.
- 5.10 I drove into the parish from the A1 to the west. This gave me an initial impression of its setting in the wider landscape and its relationship to the strategic highway network.
- 5.11 I looked initially at the Village Green. I saw its importance in the wider setting. I took the opportunity to look at the very impressive Willoughby Gallery and appreciated the exhibition which was taking place at that time.
- 5.12 I then looked at the village centre. I saw the importance of Market Place and the Church. I saw the range of commercial and community facilities in this part of the village.
- 5.13 Throughout the visit I looked at a selection of the key views (as shown in Policy CG6), the proposed non-designated heritage assets (as identified in Policy CG9), and the proposed open spaces/recreation areas (as identified in Policy CG11).
- 5.14 I looked in detail at the proposed local green spaces. I paid particular attention to proposed LGS1 (Musson's Close). I saw its relationship with the surrounding houses and the footpath to the south west leading into the open countryside.
- 5.15 I walked along Swinstead Road to the Ron Dawson Memorial Hall. In doing so I saw the ongoing development of the strategic housing site as identified in the Local Plan.
- 5.16 I finished my visit by driving towards Bourne on the A151. This part of the visit highlighted the wider landscape setting of the neighbourhood area.

6 The Neighbourhood Plan and the Basic Conditions

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

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

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area;
- be compatible with European Union (EU) obligations and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); and
- not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

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

National Planning Policies and Guidance

6.4 For the purposes of this examination the key elements of national policy relating to planning matters are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in July 2021. This approach is reflected in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

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

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

6.6 Neighbourhood plans sit within this wider context both generally, and within the more specific presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 13 of the NPPF indicates that neighbourhoods should both develop plans that support the strategic

needs set out in local plans and plan positively to support local development that is outside the strategic elements of the development plan.

- 6.7 In addition to the NPPF I have also taken account of other elements of national planning policy including Planning Practice Guidance and ministerial statements.
- 6.8 Having considered all the evidence and representations available as part of the examination I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to national planning policies and guidance in general terms subject to the recommended modifications included in this report. It sets out a positive vision for the future of the neighbourhood area within the context of its role in the settlement hierarchy. It proposes a series of policies based on its landscape and environmental character. The Basic Conditions Statement maps the policies in the Plan against the appropriate sections of the NPPF.
- 6.9 At a more practical level the NPPF indicates that plans should provide a clear framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made and that they should give a clear indication of how a decision-maker should react to a development proposal (paragraph 16d). This is reinforced in Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph ID:41-041-20140306 which indicates that policies in neighbourhood plans should be drafted with sufficient clarity so that a decision-maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Policies should also be concise, precise, and supported by appropriate evidence.
- 6.10 As submitted, the Plan does not fully accord with this range of practical issues. Most of my recommended modifications in Section 7 relate to matters of clarity and precision. They are designed to ensure that the Plan fully accords with national policy.

Contributing to sustainable development

- 6.11 There are clear overlaps between national policy and the contribution that the submitted Plan makes to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development has three principal dimensions – economic, social, and environmental. The submitted Plan has set out to achieve sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. In the economic dimension, the Plan includes policies for residential development (Policies CG2 and CG3). In the social role, it includes policies on open spaces/recreation areas (Policy CG11), local green spaces (Policy CG12) and community facilities (Policy CG15). In the environmental dimension, the Plan positively seeks to protect its natural, built, and historic environment. It has policies on landscape character (Policy CG5), key views (Policy CG6), on the Market Place (Policy CG8) and on nature conservation (Policy CG14). CGPC has undertaken its own assessment of this matter in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan

- 6.12 I have already commented in detail on the development plan context in South Kesteven in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 of this report.
- 6.13 I consider that the submitted Plan delivers a local dimension to this strategic context. The Basic Conditions Statement helpfully relates the Plan's policies to the policies in

the development plan. Subject to the recommended modification in this report, I am satisfied that the submitted Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 6.14 The Neighbourhood Plan (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 require a qualifying body either to submit an environmental report prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 or a statement of reasons why an environmental report is not required.
- 6.15 In order to comply with this requirement, SKDC undertook a screening exercise (August 2022) on the need or otherwise for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be prepared for the Plan. The report is thorough and well-constructed. As a result of this process, it was concluded that the Plan is unlikely to have any significant effects on the environment and accordingly would not require a SEA.

Habitat Regulations

- 6.16 The screening assessment included a separate Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Plan. The assessment advises that there are no Natura 2000 sites within the neighbourhood area and that the nearest Natura 2000 site (Grimsthorpe Park SAC) is approximately 5.2km from Corby Glen. The other Natura 2000 sites screened into the HRA Report undertaken for the South Kesteven Local Plan in April 2019 are over 20km from the CGNP area. The HRA was carried out by SKDC as the competent authority, in consultation with Natural England. This assessment advised that the Local Plan HRA is considered relevant and appropriate in the context of this SEA/HRA screening assessment.
- 6.17 The HRA concludes that the Plan is not likely to have significant environmental effects on a European nature conservation site or undermine their conservation objectives alone or in combination taking account of the precautionary principle. As such Appropriate Assessment is not required. The HRA report is both thorough and comprehensive. It provides assurance to all concerned that the submitted Plan takes appropriate account of important ecological and biodiversity matters.
- 6.18 Having reviewed the information provided to me as part of the examination, I am satisfied that a proportionate process has been undertaken in accordance with the various regulations. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I am entirely satisfied that the submitted Plan is compatible with this aspect of neighbourhood plan regulations.

Human Rights

- 6.19 In a similar fashion I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and that it complies with the Human Rights Act. There is no evidence that has been submitted to me to suggest otherwise. In addition, there has been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to take part in the

preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known. Based on all the evidence available to me, I conclude that the submitted Plan does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with the ECHR.

Summary

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

7 The Neighbourhood Plan policies

- 7.1 This section of the report comments on the policies in the Plan. It makes a series of recommended modifications to ensure that they have the necessary precision to meet the basic conditions.
- 7.2 The recommendations focus on the policies themselves given that the basic conditions relate primarily to this aspect of neighbourhood plans. In some cases, I have also recommended changes to the associated supporting text.
- 7.3 I am satisfied that the content and the form of the Plan is fit for purpose. It is distinctive and proportionate to the neighbourhood area. The wider community and CGPC have spent time and energy in identifying the issues and objectives that they wish to be included in their Plan. This sits at the heart of the localism agenda.
- 7.4 The Plan has been designed to reflect Planning Practice Guidance (Section 41-004-20190509) which indicates that neighbourhood plans must address the development and use of land. Section 8 of the Plan includes a package of non-land use community aspirations.
- 7.5 I have addressed the policies in the order that they appear in the submitted Plan. Where necessary I have identified the inter-relationships between the policies. I address the community aspirations after the policies.
- 7.6 For clarity, this section of the report comments on all policies.
- 7.7 Where modifications are recommended to policies they are highlighted in bold print. Any associated or free-standing changes to the text of the Plan are set out in italic print.

The initial section of the Plan (Sections 1-5)

- 7.8 The initial elements of the Plan set the scene for the range of policies. They do so in a proportionate way. The Plan is presented in a professional and thorough fashion. It includes well-selected maps. Section 1 explains the role and purpose of the neighbourhood plan agenda. It highlights the circumstances which have caused CGPC to produce the Plan. Figure 1 shows the neighbourhood area and paragraph 1.4 defines the Plan period. This part of the Plan also comments comprehensively about national and local planning policies and the emerging Local Plan.
- 7.9 Section 2 comments about the parish to good effect. It is an excellent context for the Plan and provides a detailed description of the built environment of Corby Glen (with very helpful photographs).
- 7.10 Section 3 comments about the evidence which has underpinned the production of the Plan. It overlaps with the submitted Consultation Statement. Section 4 identifies eleven themes which emerged during the various community engagement events.

- 7.11 Section 5 comments about the Vision and objectives of the Plan. The Vision is as follows:

'To ensure that Corby Glen remains a thriving village which can meet the future needs of its residents, in terms of housing, economic growth and communal facilities.

To protect the architectural heritage, community assets and rural setting of Corby Glen, such that it provides an attractive, healthy, and sustainable environment in which to live, work and visit.'

- 7.12 The remainder of this section of the report addresses each policy in turn in the context set out in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.7 of this report.

CG1 - Sustainable Development

- 7.13 This policy sets out the Plan's ambitions for sustainable development. It incorporates a series of criteria with which new development should comply. It is intended to provide a positive framework for decision-making in the parish.
- 7.14 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to the local delivery of sustainable development. The policy appropriately includes wording which will allow SKDC to apply it in a proportionate fashion. In this context I recommend modifications to some of the principles of sustainable development listed in the policy to avoid duplication.
- 7.15 I also recommend a modification to the Explanation to update the Plan. Otherwise, I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Delete a)

Replace b) with: 'demonstrate a high standard of design'

In the Explanation delete 'emerging document'

CG2 - Requirements for the Local Plan housing site

- 7.16 The policy seeks to provide added value to the policy in the LP which allocates a site for housing development in the parish at Bourne Road/Swinstead Road (Policy H1: LV-H5).
- 7.17 It acknowledges that the principle of development of land at Bourne Road/Swinstead Road has been established by the Local Plan allocation and that detailed planning permissions are in place for new dwellings on the site. It is also acknowledged that the broad requirement for the development is established by the seven criteria (a to g) set out in the Local Plan policy
- 7.18 I saw that the site was now being developed. In its response to the clarification note CGPC acknowledged that the policy has now been overtaken by events and can be deleted. I recommend accordingly.

Delete the policy

Delete the Explanation.

CG3 - Criteria for other new housing sites including design and size

- 7.19 This policy sets out criteria for the development of windfall and/or infill housing sites in the parish. The Explanation acknowledges that any development must be sensitive and appropriate, the policy adds local criteria to the higher-level Local Plan Policy: SP3 - Infill Development. The Plan comments that the aim of the policy is to avoid incursions into the surrounding open countryside and to protect the setting of the village. It is accepted that settlement boundaries are not defined in the South Kesteven Local Plan.
- 7.20 The policy takes a positive approach to this matter. The various criteria are locally-distinctive and non-prescriptive. In addition, the policy helpfully cross-refers to other policies in the Plan.
- 7.21 SKDC suggest the phrase “(usually expected to be no more than 11 dwellings) as defined in the adopted Local Plan” is moved into the explanatory text section given that adopted Local Plan Policy SP3 relating to infill development does not specifically define a set amount of development within the policy itself. In its response to the CN CGPC agreed with this suggestion. I recommend accordingly. I also recommend a detailed modification to criterion g to bring the clarity required by the NPPF. Otherwise, I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

In a) delete ‘(usually expected to be no more than 11 dwellings)’

In g) replace ‘adversely’ with ‘unacceptably’

At the end of the second paragraph of the Explanation add ‘Development proposals will usually be expected to be no more than 11 dwellings.’

CG4 - House Extensions & Conversions

- 7.22 This policy has two related parts. The first advises that residential extensions and conversions should be designed to respect the character of nearby buildings and their setting and comply with a series of criteria. The second comments that sustainable design features (such as sustainable drainage, porous/permeable surfacing for drives and domestic scale renewable energy and electric vehicle charging points) will be supported where they are incorporated into an overall design that complements the character of the area.
- 7.23 The policy takes a positive and non-prescriptive approach to this matter. The first part of the policy has been carefully worded to draw attention to important matters for extension and conversions.
- 7.24 I recommend a specific modification to the wording of the second part of the policy to allow it to be more readily used as part of the development management process. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

At the beginning of the second part of the policy add: ‘The use of’

CG5 - Landscape Character & Openness

- 7.25 The policy comments that proposals for development should respect the distinct character and identity of the Parish of Corby Glen (including Birkolme) within the attractive open landscape of the Kesteven Uplands. The Explanation helpfully advises that the open rolling landscape of the Kesteven Uplands NCA (No.75), before the landform slopes down into the Lower Trent and Belvoir Vales around Grantham, is fundamental to the character of Corby Glen. In addition, it comments that a policy stance is needed to address the potential impact of other large-scale built development including, for example; solar farms and wind farms. Whilst the economic importance of modern farming and the way in which it can contribute to landscape quality, is acknowledged, the Plan comments that great care must also be taken in the location and design of new agricultural buildings
- 7.26 I saw the importance of the relationship between Corby Glen and its surrounding landscape during the visit. The policy takes a positive and non-prescriptive approach to this important matter. I recommend a detailed modification to criterion g to bring the clarity required by the NPPF. Otherwise, I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the environmental dimension of sustainable development

In d) replace ‘adversely’ with ‘unacceptably’

CG6 - Key Views

- 7.27 The policy identifies a series of key views which contribute to the character and the appearance of the neighbourhood area. The approach is underpinned by the information in the Description of Key Views. The policy comments that proposals should respect the identified key views and should not compromise their significance in the neighbourhood area. It also advises that development proposals which enhance or improve the identified key views will be supported. Finally it comments that development proposals which, through their location, scale, and appearance, detract from the key views will not be supported.
- 7.28 I looked at some of the views during the visit. Their importance was self-evident. The policy itself takes a balanced approach to this important matter.
- 7.29 I recommend that elements of context to the policy are deleted and repositioned into the Explanation. Otherwise, I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

Delete the second sentence of the initial part of the policy

In the Explanation add ‘More detail, including maps and photographs are provided in the accompanying document entitled Key Views’ after the second sentence in the initial paragraph.

CG7 - Designated heritage assets

- 7.30 This policy focuses on designated heritage assets. The Explanation comments as follows:

‘Corby Glen has a Conservation Area, and there are 36 listed buildings and other features, as well as three Scheduled Monuments. Details are provided in the evidence document. Consultation revealed that the historic environment is a valued asset and that residents wish buildings and structures to be protected from insensitive development. Individually and cumulatively, these designated heritage assets make a major contribution to the quality and character of Corby Glen. In the Local Plan, Policy EN6 covers the historic environment providing a good overall context for the consideration of proposals affecting designated heritage assets. It is not intended to duplicate EN6, but a Neighbourhood Plan policy adds local detail, taking account of the concentration and nature of assets in Corby Glen.’

- 7.31 In this context I am satisfied that the policy brings added value beyond national and local planning policies. Nevertheless, as submitted, the policy has a complicated structure. I recommend that it is recast to bring the clarity required by the NPPF. This approach reflects the representation to the policy made by SKDC and CGPC’s response to that suggestion. The modified policy will contribute to the delivery of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘Development proposals should preserve or enhance designated heritage assets and contribute to the quality and character of their settings.

Proposals affecting designated heritage assets, or their setting, should respond positively to the contents of Local Plan Policy EN6 and reflect the concentration of assets in and around Corby Glen and Birkholme, and the relationship between the asset, archaeology, and local history.’

CG8 – The Market Place

- 7.32 The Plan comments that the Market Place is one of the parish’s most valued assets and the community wishes that the space and the buildings and structures around it should be protected from insensitive development and whenever the opportunity arises, enhanced. It is also recognised in the Conservation Area Appraisal. I saw the importance of the Market Place during the visit.
- 7.33 The Plan advises that the intention of this policy is to set out specific, location based, requirements over and above the general protection afforded to designated heritage assets set out in Policy CG7.
- 7.34 As submitted, the opening element of the policy has a negative approach. I recommend a modification to remedy this matter and to generate the positive approach to policies as set out in the NPPF. Whilst I am satisfied that the criteria are appropriate to the specific circumstances in the Market Place, I recommend two detailed modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF. Otherwise, I am satisfied that the policy meets

the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the opening element of the policy with: ‘Development proposals that enhance the value and appeal of the Market Place for residents and visitors will be supported where they:’

In both b) and c) replace ‘adversely’ with ‘unacceptably’

CG9 - Local (non-designated) heritage assets and positive unlisted buildings

- 7.35 This policy proposes a package of non-designated heritage assets. It advises that proposals involving non-designated heritage assets should demonstrate how they would contribute to the conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the architectural/historic interest of the building/structure concerned. It also comments that proposals should take account of local style, materials, detail and the character, context and setting of assets.
- 7.36 I looked at some of the assets during the visit. I saw their importance to the character of Corby Glen
- 7.37 SKDC suggests that the third part of the policy should be deleted. Whilst it largely restates paragraph 203 of the NPPF, I am satisfied that it is appropriate within the wider context of the policy.
- 7.38 I recommend the deletion of the fourth part of the policy as it repeats the second part. Otherwise, I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

Delete the fourth part of the policy.

CG10 – Archaeology

- 7.39 This policy comments that development proposals affecting Scheduled Monuments, other archaeological sites and areas of archaeological potential, or their settings should demonstrate that they meet a series of criteria. I have taken account of CGPC’s response to the clarification note. On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that the policy brings an added local dimension to national policy on archaeological issues.
- 7.40 I recommend the inclusion of additional text in the Explanation (as suggested by CGPC) and a correction to the reference to paragraph numbers in the NPPF. Otherwise, I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

In the Explanation add an additional paragraph to read:

‘The Lincolnshire Heritage Explorer currently has 106 records spanning the Neolithic, Roman and medieval periods. Future building pressure could put at risk unexplored archaeological sites, such as the medieval fishponds to the north of St John’s church. Policy CG10 emphasises the local importance attached to preserving the village’s rich archaeological heritage.’

In the Explanation replace '(Para.189)' with '(Paragraph 194)'

CG11 - Open space and recreation facilities

- 7.41 This policy identifies eight open space and recreational facilities. It offers support to proposals which would improve the facilities and identifies the circumstances in which proposals which would involve a reduction in the number or quality of the facilities will be supported.
- 7.42 I looked at the identified facilities. I saw their importance to the local community. The policy correctly acknowledges that replacement facilities may arise in the Plan period.
- 7.43 Within this overall policy context, I recommend the deletion of the unnecessary second part of the policy which comments about the importance of protecting the identified open spaces. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social dimension of sustainable development.

Delete the second part of the policy

CG12 - Proposed Local Green Spaces

- 7.44 This policy proposes the designation of five local green spaces (LGSs). It is underpinned by the details in the Evidence document.
- 7.45 I looked at the proposed LGSs carefully during the visit. Given the details in the Evidence document about proposed LGS1 (Musson's Close) I paid particular attention to its proposed designation. I saw that it was an attractive open amenity space within the context of the surrounding residential development. I saw the way in which it connected to the footpath network leading into the surrounding countryside (to the south west).
- 7.46 On the basis of all the information available to me, including my own observations, I am satisfied that proposed LGSs comply with the three tests in paragraph 102 of the NPPF.
- 7.47 In addition, I am satisfied that their proposed designation would accord with the more general elements of paragraph 101 of the NPPF. Firstly, I am satisfied that their designation is consistent with the local planning of sustainable development. They do not otherwise prevent sustainable development coming forward in the neighbourhood area and no such development has been promoted or suggested. Secondly, I am satisfied that the LGSs are capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period. Indeed, they are an established element of the local environment and, in most cases, have existed in their current format for many years. In addition, no evidence was brought forward during the examination that would suggest that the proposed local green spaces would not endure beyond the end of the Plan period. Whilst planning applications have been submitted on parts of what is now proposed as LGS1, planning permission has consistently been refused for such developments.
- 7.48 The policy takes the matter-of-fact approach as set out in paragraph 103 of the NPPF. The policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social dimension of sustainable development.

CG13 - Countryside management

- 7.49 This policy builds on the wider planning context provided by Local Plan and applies it at a local level. The policy comments that any proposal for development is expected to safeguard the landscape character, protect areas of wildlife interest, and protect or enhance the historic environment of the surrounding open countryside.
- 7.50 The policy takes a positive approach to this matter. In addition, the criteria used in the policy are distinctive to the parish. I recommend that the first part of the policy is modified to acknowledge that some of the proposals addressed in the policy will be permitted development (and as such will not follow the usual planning process). Otherwise, I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

At the beginning of the first part of the policy add: ‘Insofar as planning permission is required,’

CG14 - Nature conservation and biodiversity

- 7.51 This policy comments that development proposals should demonstrate how potential impacts on local wildlife sites, habitats and species networks have been considered. It then advises that as appropriate to their scale and type, development proposals should incorporate appropriate measures to protect wildlife, habitats, enhance biodiversity and avoid fragmentation, and take account of a series of principles.
- 7.52 The policy takes a positive approach to this matter. In addition, the criteria used in the policy are distinctive to the parish. The wider policy takes account of the implications of the Environment Act 2021. In addition, it has been carefully designed so that SKDC can operate it in a proportionate fashion. In this context I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

CG15 - Community facilities and local services

- 7.53 This policy identifies a series of community facilities. I saw their importance to the local community during the visit. The policy comments both about proposals which improve and extend the facilities or create new facilities and proposals which would involve the loss of an identified community facility. The latter part of the policy acknowledges that the viability and the use of the facilities may change within the Plan period. The policy takes a positive approach to this important matter.
- 7.54 I recommend the deletion of a sentence from the second part of the policy. It has no purpose within the overall context of the policy.
- 7.55 In its response to the clarification note, CGPC agreed that it would be appropriate to incorporate the two community halls (as identified in Policy CG16) into this policy. I recommend accordingly. I also recommend an addition to the Explanation to highlight the particular importance of the community halls. Otherwise, I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social dimension of sustainable development.

Incorporate the Ron Dawson Memorial Hall and Church Street Meeting Rooms into the list of facilities in the policy.

In the second part of the policy delete: ‘The Community facilities in the Parish will be protected.’

In Explanation add the following before the final paragraph: ‘Policy CG15 includes the Ron Dawson Memorial Hall and Church Street Meeting Rooms in the list of facilities. The Parish Council recognises the importance of these community halls and strongly supports any initiative that will increase their value to the community.’

CG16 – Community halls

- 7.56 This is a similar policy to Policy CG15. In this case, it has a focus on community halls.
- 7.57 In its response to the clarification note CGPC agreed to the incorporation of the policy into Policy CG15. I have recommended a modification to Policy CG15 on this basis. In these circumstances, I recommend the deletion of Policy CG16

Delete the policy

Delete the Explanation

CG17 - Local businesses and employment

- 7.58 This policy has two related parts. The first comments that proposals for the development of new small business units, the expansion or diversification of existing small units and tourism-related development will be supported, providing that they meet a series of criteria. The second advises that insofar as planning permission is required, proposals for home-based working will be supported where there is no unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, or on the character of the immediate area of the property concerned.
- 7.59 The policy takes a positive approach to this matter. It has regard to Section 6 of the NPPF. I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the economic and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

CG18 - Telecommunications & broadband

- 7.60 This policy comments that proposals for development that improve electronic communications such as superfast broadband and the mobile phone network will be supported providing any adverse impact on the environment can be adequately mitigated and other neighbourhood plan policies on heritage, archaeology, open spaces, and key views are satisfied.
- 7.61 The policy responds positively to these matters and acknowledges the importance of high-quality communications to the rural communities. I recommend the deletion of the unnecessary use of ‘adverse’. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Delete 'adverse'

CG19 - Transport & active travel

- 7.62 This policy sets out a context within which local traffic profiles and the character of the local highways network will be managed in the Plan period. It advises that development proposals which would generate a significant amount of additional traffic and/or which would generate HGV traffic, need to be supported by an evidence-based Transport Assessment or Statement.
- 7.63 The policy responds positively to these matters and acknowledges the concerns which residents have about traffic levels in rural communities. I recommend that the initial element of the second part of the policy is reconfigured so that it sets out the requirements for new development rather than anticipate the outcomes of planning applications. Plainly planning decisions will be based on a range of policies in the development plan. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In the second part of the policy delete 'Development proposals that include adequate parking measures will be supported' and then add as a separate part of the policy 'Development proposals should include adequate parking measures'

CG20 - Countryside access and rights of way

- 7.64 This policy has two related points. The first comments that development proposals (which meet other policy requirements) will be supported if they improve or extend the existing network of public footpaths and bridleways in and around the village, especially where the route allows greater access to services and facilities or the surrounding open countryside. The second comments that development that would result in the loss of existing footpaths and bridleways or would create obstacles to the use of these routes by walkers and riders will not be supported.
- 7.65 The policy helpfully captures the character of the neighbourhood area. I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Community Aspirations

- 7.66 The Plan includes a series of non-land use planning issues. They are set out in a separate part of the plan (Section 8) in accordance with national policy. I am satisfied that the Aspirations are appropriate and distinctive to the parish. The following Aspirations are particularly noteworthy:
- CA1 Development of walking routes;
 - CA2 Improvements to community halls and open spaces; and
 - CA4 Improvements to the School and related childcare.

Other matters - General

- 7.67 This report has recommended a series of modifications both to the policies and to the text in the submitted Plan. Where consequential changes to the text are required directly as a result of my recommended modification to the policy concerned, I have highlighted them in this report. However other changes to the general text may be required elsewhere in the Plan as a result of the recommended modifications to the policies. It will be appropriate for SKDC and CGPC to have the flexibility to make any necessary consequential changes to the general text. I recommend accordingly. This flexibility applies to the refinements to Policies GG9 and GG14 suggested by CGPC in its response to the fact check report.

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

Other Matters – Specific

- 7.68 SKDC highlight that several of the references to paragraph numbers in the NPPF are outdated. CGPC acknowledges the issue. I recommend that the references are corrected.

Correct the NPPF paragraph numbers in the various Explanations

8 Summary and Conclusions

Summary

- 8.1 The Plan sets out a range of policies to guide and direct development proposals in the period up to 2036. It is distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community.
- 8.2 Following the independent examination of the Plan, I have concluded that the Corby Glen Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the basic conditions for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan subject to a series of recommended modifications.

Conclusion

- 8.3 On the basis of the findings in this report, I recommend to South Kesteven District Council that subject to the incorporation of the modifications set out in this report the Corby Glen Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum.

Referendum Area

- 8.4 I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Plan area. In my view, the neighbourhood area is entirely appropriate for this purpose and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore recommend that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the neighbourhood area as approved by South Kesteven District Council on 24 January 2018.
- 8.5 I am grateful to everyone who has helped in any way to ensure that this examination has run in a smooth and efficient manner. CGPC's response to the clarification note was both thorough and helpful.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
17 October 2023