

GILLINGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2016 – 2031

Gillingham Town Council

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1. FOREWORD

Neighbourhood Plans provide the opportunity for communities to create their own plans for future development. The Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group, supported by Gillingham Town Council, the Three Rivers Partnership and the Local Planning Authority, has taken this opportunity to work with the community to deliver this Neighbourhood Plan for Gillingham.

We have been fortunate to be able to refer to earlier consultations carried out for the Three Rivers Partnership Gillingham Town Plan (developed 2007-2012), the Gillingham Town Design Statement (2012) and the Three Rivers Partnership Action Plan (2012). This information has been updated and augmented by discussions with residents at open days and workshops over the last three years. We have also talked to planning professionals, landowners, developers, local organisations, local health professionals, neighbouring town and parish councils, the Local Planning Authority and the Highways Authority.

The result is this document, the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan covers important areas such as Housing, Economy, Community Facilities, Retail and Town Centre Uses, Transport, Green and Urban Spaces, Flood Risk, Design and Heritage, Climate Change and Renewable Energy. All themes have been open to consultation with the community at events such as the Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show, the Party on the Rec, the Drop-In Event at Paris Court in March 2015, on-line surveys, questionnaires and, ultimately, a full public consultation in early 2016 with 8 weeks for the community to respond.

Once approved by the community in a referendum and 'made' (adopted) by the Local Planning Authority the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the development plan for North Dorset. The plan will direct future development at Gillingham to meet the changing needs of the community in the period to 2031. It indicates where and when that development should take place and what additional community facilities will be required as a result of it.

The next few years will be a significant period of growth in the town's long history. The Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan aims to address key issues facing Gillingham in this time. The proposals provided for in this plan will help our area become a stronger community.

My thanks go to all those who have worked so hard to bring this plan to fruition and to the whole community for the positive response that you have shown.

David Beaton

Chairman, Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group

2. THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – IN SUMMARY

So what difference will this Neighbourhood Plan make? ...

We hope it will support the type of housing that people particularly want to see in this area. This includes **affordable homes**, more **custom or self-build housing**, for people wanting to design and build their own homes (either to create their dream home, or a home which they can afford), and more flexible living accommodation that can **adapt to all ages and lifestyles**, including the increasing number of people working from home.

*Policies
1 – 3,
7 and 8*

It should help our **town centre thrive** through providing some flexibility to adapt to the changes in retailing that are affecting many towns, and the likely expansion as our population increases with the new strategic neighbourhood in the south of the town. In particular we hope to encourage a more **comprehensive approach** to be taken to the regeneration around the **Station Road area** to create a thriving sub-area of the town centre which links to and supports the High Street.

*Policies
7, 8, 11
and 27*

We have excellent schools and a really interesting and dynamic range of businesses. The policies in the plan should **support businesses** looking to invest in the area. The policies make sure that there are opportunities for businesses to locate or expand in the main employment sites, and **further educational and vocational training** to provide the skills for local workers that can really boost the local economy.

*Policies
4 – 6 and
15*

The road and rail links to the wider area make Gillingham a really attractive place to locate, in an attractive rural setting yet in easy reach of much larger towns and cities. As the town grows, the transport infrastructure needs to grow with it, and therefore we have included proposals for the **station as a transport hub**, as well as some **key pedestrian and cycle links** providing attractive and convenient routes around the town.

*Policies
10 - 12*

We have a **range of community buildings and venues**, from schools and medical centres to pubs and post offices. Many of these are located in the town centre, or within or close to the local centres in the outlying suburbs. Our policies look to **safeguard these key facilities**, and make sure **new facilities come forward in core locations** as the town grows.

*Policies
9 and
14 - 17*

The network of **green spaces** within and around the town is really important to the character and enjoyment of the area. We have identified those spaces which are really cherished by local residents, and include plans to provide more spaces where there is likely to be a deficit as the population grows – including a **new cemetery**, better access to and management of the **river corridors** and potential areas for further **informal recreation** and **formal sports** use.

*Policies
6 and
18 - 23*

Guidance is also given on the **heritage and design** of new development. Over the years, Gillingham has developed piecemeal with resulting differences in design, some harmonious, some less so. However, the character of Gillingham as a small market town has remained largely intact and the policies look to make sure future designs cherish the best of the past whilst looking to the future.

*Policies
7, 13 and
24 – 28*

The plan **does not allocate any further areas for development** over that proposed in the Local Plan – since the extent of development in the Southern Extension will provide a major source of new housing and employment land over the period this plan covers (to 2031).

3. GILLINGHAM NOW – IN SUMMARY

Gillingham Neighbourhood Area (coloured red) includes one of the main towns in North Dorset. It covers 3,129 ha (12 square miles), with the built up area of the town covering just over 300 ha.

Key facts about this area:

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POPULATION AND HOUSING

- > One of the fastest growing towns in the South West over the last two decades.
- > 5,107 households and 11,756 people (2011).
- > By 2031 the population is projected to grow to in excess of 17,000 people (7,300 households).
- > 4.5% houses 'vacant', 74% homes owned / mortgaged (2011).
- > Average house price £220,000 (2015).



BUSINESS AND EDUCATION

- > Main service centre in this area.
- > About 70 shops in the town centre, and 1,000 businesses located in the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- > Four main commercial estates (Brickfields Business Park, Brickfields Industrial Estate, Kingsmead Business Park and The Old Market Centre in Lower Station Road).
- > 3.7% unemployed (2011)
- > 'Good' Secondary school, with some areas 'Outstanding' (2015).

TRANSPORT

- > Main railway connection on Exeter to London line. The railway embankment, with single road crossing point, separates the southern parts from the remainder the town and creates an ever busy vehicle and pedestrian focus.
- > The A303 trunk road is only four miles away.
- > Town centre relief road (Le Neubourg Way) is a significant feature, as the main vehicular artery, creating another separation.

ENVIRONMENT

- > The River Lodden, the Shreen Water and the River Stour meander through and around the town (although not always accessible or noticeable).
- > Surrounding countryside of mainly pastures with hedgerows and some associated trees makes an important setting for the town of Gillingham.

HERITAGE

- > The tower on the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Gillingham's Grade 1 Listed Building, is visible from many areas.
- > There are over 60 Grade II Listed Buildings. Most of these are clustered in the historic core.
- > The area around Wyke Hall is a locally important parkland identified by Dorset Gardens Trust.

4. THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

- 4.1. Planning policies are very important in deciding what will or won't get built.
- 4.2. In North Dorset, the new Local Plan sets the strategic planning policies for the area, including issues such as the overall housing numbers for the area, and what locations are most suited for new development. Sitting alongside this are Neighbourhood Plans. These plans can say what type of development is needed in a local area, and make sure it is planned and built in a way that local people would support.
- 4.3. A Neighbourhood Plan has to broadly align to the strategic, local plan policies – but it can change and influence things. For example, it can allocate additional sites for development, include design guidelines to say what new buildings should look like, or it can designate local green spaces that cannot be built upon.
- 4.4. Neighbourhood planning is about working together, as a community, with local landowners and developers, to find the best fit for everyone to meet our local needs. Local people can decide what issues to focus on in their Neighbourhood Plan, what places, and what their priorities are.

How this Neighbourhood Plan was agreed

- 4.5. The following diagram sets out the key steps taken in progressing this plan through to its referendum.



What National Policy and the Local Plan says about Gillingham

National Planning Policy Framework

4.6. The general approach to planning is set out in a document called the National Planning Policy Framework. This makes clear that the planning system is there to guide development to positive improvements and sustainable solutions. Development should be carried out in a way that makes a positive contribution to our lives but also leaves a lasting legacy for our children. It identifies three distinct planning roles and objectives:

- > **Economic** – Contributing to building a strong economy: ensuring that sufficient land is available in the right places and at the right time.
- > **Social** – Providing homes that will meet the needs of future generations and supporting the community’s health, social and cultural well-being.
- > **Environmental** – Protecting our environment: using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating climate change.

The Local Plan

4.7. The Local Planning Authority holds responsibility for preparing a Local Plan for the wider area and determining most local applications. The key elements of the spatial strategy for Gillingham are:

- > a strategic site allocation (SSA) to the south of the town delivering the majority of the town’s housing and employment growth along with supporting infrastructure. When built, this should provide about 1,800 homes;
- > a range and choice of employment sites in various locations around the town to support a more diverse economy, including land at Brickfields and Kingsmead Business Parks;
- > an enhanced town centre supported by the mixed use regeneration of the Station Road area resulting in better integration of shopping, education, leisure, cultural and transport functions; and
- > an enhanced green infrastructure network focused primarily on the river corridors linking new development to key locations such as the town centre.

In the following sections, there are ‘boxes’ including more detail about what the Local Plan and national planning guidance says on each theme

5. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

A vision for Gillingham

- 5.1. The vision for Gillingham was developed with the local community at a series of community events and consultations. It was refined as issues were explored, and used to provide the themes and related objectives for the plan. These themes and objectives are:

HOUSING: There will be sufficient affordable housing to meet identified need, alongside other housing types to sustain a socially mixed and inclusive community. Care has been taken to make sure vulnerable people are not isolated.

ECONOMY: Gillingham will have a flourishing and diverse local economy, with a wide range of jobs and training opportunities, based on our local strengths. These include an exceptional stream of young talent from Gillingham School, together with UK leading businesses in Life Science, Health and Beauty, Speciality Gloves and Luminaire Design and Manufacture.

DESIGN, CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY:

Designs will have enhanced the richness and appearance of the built environment, and created a safe and vibrant community with a strong sense of community identity. Buildings will be sustainable, adaptable and environmentally friendly. Gillingham will be taking strides to address climate change adaptation and mitigation and making steady progress towards a reducing carbon footprint through energy efficiency, demand reduction, reducing the need to travel and transitioning towards renewable energy use and local energy generation.

HERITAGE: The heritage of the area that underpins its history and contributes to its local character is preserved, enhanced and valued.

TRANSPORT: Gillingham will have a safe and resilient transport network (i.e. roads, cycleways and footpaths), with particularly good walking and cycle links between neighbourhoods, the town and its surroundings, and convenient public transport services to take people from near their homes to jobs, schools, healthcare and other services.

RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRE USES:

Gillingham will have a strong and vibrant town centre, where the variety of town centre businesses generates a positive atmosphere in the High Street, with activity during the day and at night time.

GREEN AND URBAN SPACES, AND AVOIDING FLOOD RISK: There will be plenty of well-designed and maintained public spaces, convenient to local residents, with facilities for all age groups. There will be focal areas of public space, which help define the character and form of the town and provide opportunities for local events and festivals. There will also be a network of green spaces that enhance the attractiveness of the town, support local wildlife, provide leisure and recreation opportunities and contribute to good health and wellbeing. Areas at risk of flooding will be avoided, and river corridors managed effectively for flood, biodiversity and recreation benefits.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES: The infrastructure needed to support sustainable growth will be provided 'in sync' with new developments, providing excellent opportunities for local healthcare, education and training, community, leisure, sport and cultural activities, that enable young and older people to play a full and active part in community life. RiversMeet will form the basis of a multi-use community hub. This facility, along with other valued services in the town (such as the Library and Museum) will be celebrated and cherished. Good use will be made of facilities through careful planning, and services and facilities will have a high profile and will be readily available to visitors, businesses and local residents, at a place and time convenient to them. There will be plenty of places for clubs and activities to operate from.

- 5.2. The resulting vision, put simply, is:

OUR VISION IS THAT...

Gillingham will become a place which combines the best of town and country living and creates a healthy environment for working people, young families, those in retirement and older people.

Future development will consist of well-planned areas which enhance the natural environment and provide beautifully and imaginatively designed homes that are affordable for ordinary people, together with job opportunities within easy reach and good access to healthcare. The town will have strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities at the centre of its communities, together with integrated and accessible transport systems. There will be generous green spaces (gardens, streets and open spaces) which will link to the wider natural environment, and provide opportunities for residents to grow their own food. Local people's aspirations will be put at the heart of decision making, and through community ownership of land and a long-term stewardship of assets.

- 5.3. The following sections of this Neighbourhood Plan set out the ideas and policies under each of the theme headings.
- 5.4. An additional issue was also discussed in the early sessions regarding **GOVERNANCE**. This is covered in the final chapter of this plan. It should go without saying that a Neighbourhood Plan should reflect the wishes and aspirations of the community as a whole. Having adopted the Plan, it should be used to guide decisions on future development – buildings, spaces and services. It should also be kept under review to make sure it continues to be effective, and can be updated as our needs change. And, perhaps most importantly, everyone in the community, including elderly people and younger people, should be given the opportunity to talk about their experiences and be involved in solving problems and guiding the key decisions affecting the area.

So how will the plan affect different areas of Gillingham?

- 5.5. The plan does not allocate further land for housing or employment, as these are well covered in the Local Plan and will be largely detailed through the master planning of the Southern Extension. Nor does it make any changes to the settlement boundary which separates the main settlements from the wider countryside (although it does highlight the need to maintain important gaps in key locations).
- 5.6. The plan does pick out key elements that are of particular local importance and should influence future development decisions, particular local community facilities and local centres, recreation areas (and where these may come forward in the future), and how all the key areas can be better linked through the provision of routes that are more suited for pedestrians and cyclists together with an improved transport hub at the station.

Figure 5.1 – Overview of the Neighbourhood Plan area strategy (this map is not definitive and the symbols are not to scale)

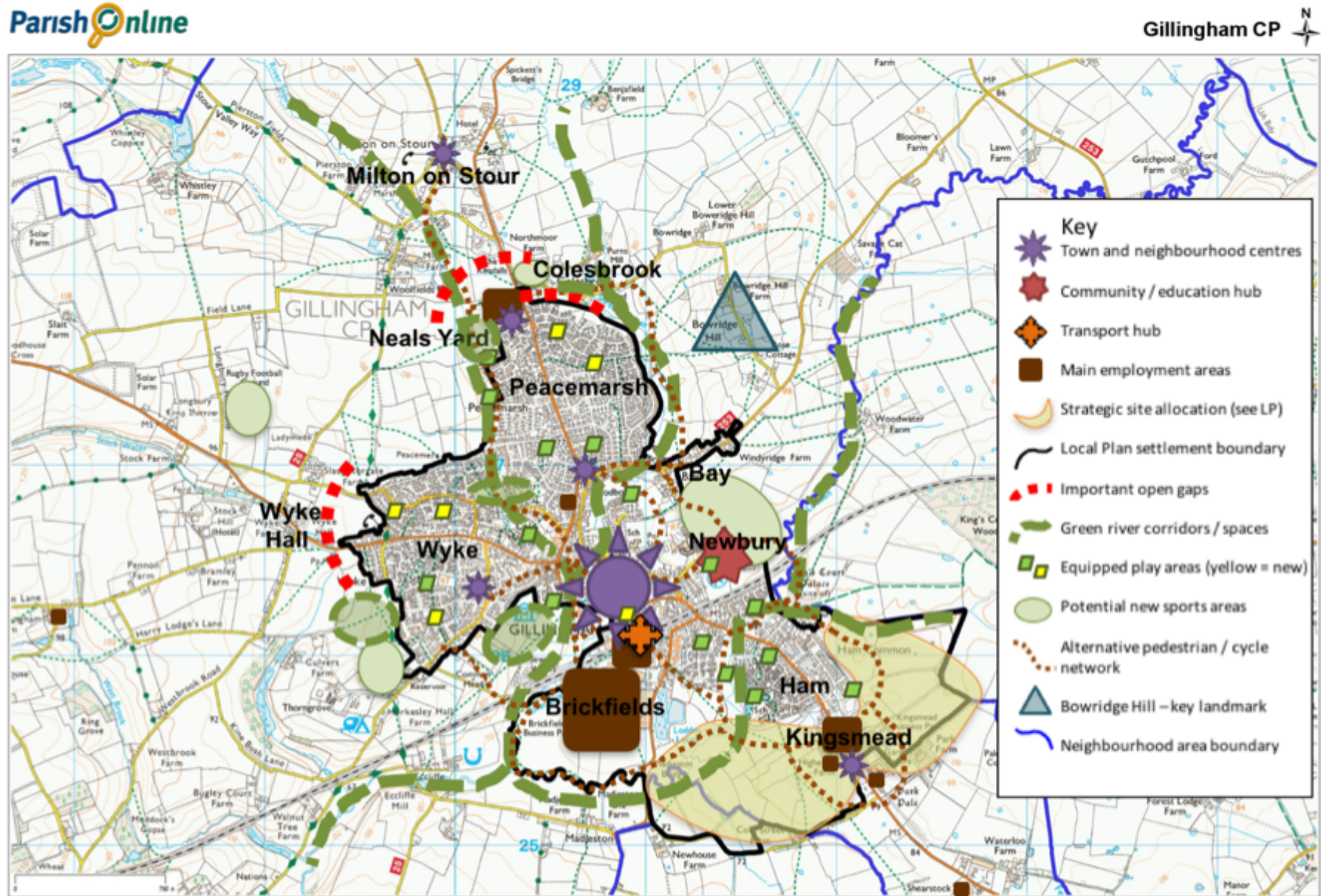


Figure 5.2 –Key issues for each area

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| <p>MILTON-ON-STOUR</p> | <p>No major changes anticipated – safeguarding the separate character of this settlement is the key driver, together with retaining the small community hub at the garage / stores and improved pedestrian / cycle links into the main town.</p> | | <p>These three areas will strengthen as the commercial and community heart of the town. The historic part of the High Street will be revitalised through a conservation enhancement project centred on the Square / Town Bridge</p> <p>The area off Hardings Lane will continue to grow as the main education / leisure hub for the area</p> <p>There are long term plans for the Station Road area to be re-developed for a mix of housing, retail / office and recreation, including an improved public transport interchange.</p> <p>The green river corridors that run through the area will continue to link the countryside into the very heart of the town, with better public access. Brickfields will continue as the major employment site for the town</p> | <p>HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE</p> <p>HIGH STREET AND NEWBURY</p> <p>LE NEUBOURG WAY, STATION ROAD AND BRICKFIELDS (South West of the Town Centre)</p> |
| <p>PEACEMARSH (Northern Gillingham) and COLESBROOK</p> | <p>No major changes anticipated – a further space is needed for an equipped play area. The area around the surgery may be strengthened as a neighbourhood centre, providing a complementary alternative to the local centre at Lodbourne. Improved cycle / pedestrian routes will be developed along the rural edges to provide attractive alternative routes linking into the town</p> | | <p>Key changes in this area are linked with the major development of the Southern Extension, for which a separate masterplan is being drafted. This should include proposals for a new local centre, and improved links into the town for cyclists / pedestrians.</p> | <p>HAM (South-East Gillingham) and the Southern Extension</p> |
| <p>BAY (East of Gillingham)</p> | <p>The Local Plan anticipates that land at Bay will accommodate up to 50 dwellings, and its design and layout will need to respect the separate character of that hamlet. The area has potential to be designated as a Conservation Area. No other major changes anticipated.</p> | | <p>Elsewhere, in the wider rural area, the Plan supports proposals for low-key recreation and projects that enhance the landscape</p> | |
| <p>WYKE (Western Gillingham)</p> | <p>No major changes anticipated – Broad Robin will continue to act as a local centre. An equipped play area is needed for those living in the Rolls Bridge Way area. The important gap with Wyke Hall is noted.</p> | | | |

6. HOUSING

HOUSING: *There will be sufficient affordable housing to meet identified need, alongside other housing types to sustain a socially mixed and inclusive community. Care has been taken to make sure vulnerable people are not isolated.*

6.1. The Local Plan has set a housing target of at least 2,200 homes over the plan period. Most of this (about 1,800 homes) will be in the Southern Extension of the town.

6.2. Due to the large amount of planning involved, all matters of infrastructure improvement necessary to support such a large and complex development are to be set out in a separate phased infrastructure delivery scheme agreed between the consortium of developers and the Gillingham Growth Board and ratified by the Local Planning Authority. This will include improvements to the road system, community facilities, education facilities, sewerage and drainage and consideration of the floodplain. Both the housing and infrastructure are expected to be delivered in carefully managed phases over 25 years.

6.3. The other large site is the regeneration of the Station Road Area which could deliver about 200 new homes as part of a mixed use redevelopment as proposed in Policy 8.

6.4. The only other site specifically noted in the Local Plan is land at Bay, which is estimated to be able to accommodate up to 50 new homes.

6.5. Outside of the existing town boundaries, there are other sites that could be built on for future housing growth, but there has been no clear indication through the consultations on this Neighbourhood Plan that local residents wish to support more development than currently planned, or encroach further into the countryside. Land outside of the existing town boundaries is classed as countryside, and therefore requirements for further growth or changes to the settlement boundary can be considered through the review of the Local Plan.

What national policy says...

Neighbourhoods should develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing (16) to deliver the homes and thriving local places that are needed (para 17)

The supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as extensions to existing towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities (para 52)

The Self-build and Custom House-building Act 2015 also places a duty on Local Planning Authorities to assess the demand in their area for all types of housing, including custom build, and to have regard for that demand in carrying out planning and other functions (para 159)

What the Local Plan says...

Policy 6 – Housing refers to Gillingham delivering at least 2,200 dwellings over the plan period. 25% of these houses should be affordable housing.

Policy 17 - In addition to infilling and regeneration within the settlement boundary, Gillingham’s housing needs will be met through the development of a strategic allocation to the south of the town, the mixed-use regeneration of land at Station Road to the south of the town centre; and the development of the land to the south and south-west of Bay

People wishing to build their own home can do so either on an infill plot in a town or village, or by replacing an existing dwelling in the countryside. (para 5.56)

Land at Bay

- 6.6. Outline planning consent has been approved in October 2016 (subject to the completion of a S106 agreement) for the development of land between Barnaby Mead and Bay (application ref 2/2016/0149/OUT). There were over 250 letters of objection, highlighting the local concerns about the proposed scheme, in particular traffic impact, flood risk, landscape and heritage concerns. Although the site had not been specifically allocated in the Local Plan, it was within the settlement boundary and is mentioned in the local plan as part of the housing strategy for the town. The planning approval will include conditions that seek to address many of the points raised, including
- > submission and approval of details of the layout, scale or appearance of the building and access arrangements (which would be consulted on as part of a reserved matters application)
 - > submission and approval of a detailed surface water management scheme and a foul water drainage strategy
 - > implementation of an agreed archaeological fieldwork together with post-excavation work and publication of the results
 - > biodiversity mitigation measures, which includes the management of the undeveloped area north of the site (up to Shreen water) for wild flowers and protected species, installation of bat boxes / bricks across the site and minimisation of external lighting,
 - > submission and approval of a travel plan with targets and measures to achieve sustainable travel arrangements
 - > submission of a construction traffic management plan
- 6.7. The S106 will also secure
- > provision of a link to the footpath to the south
 - > financial contributions towards upgrading a range of community buildings, including a community hall, school improvements, library improvements
 - > financial contributions towards upgrading a range of sport and leisure facilities, including play equipment and improvements to the Harding’s Lane recreation ground
 - > affordable housing at 25%, with a split of 30% shared ownership and 70% rented
- 6.8. The policies in this neighbourhood plan should guide any reserved matter application, and the key points are summarised here in Table 6.1

Table 6.1 –design requirements for Land at Bay

| Policy | Summary | Guidance |
|---------------|--|--|
| 2 | Encourages building layouts that can adapt to the changing needs of future occupants over and above building regulation requirements | Details should be submitted explaining how this objective has been considered in the dwelling designs |
| 12 | Seeks to secure opportunities for developments to connect to and help deliver the pedestrian and cycle network | The layout should include the link shown through the site as indicated in Figure 9.4 – consideration could be given to designing and aligning this route to also address Policy 23 |
| 21 and | Supports measures that enhance public access to the river corridor | This is particularly important for the layout, orientation and landscaping on |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| <p>24 and 26</p> | <p>environment, enhance the biodiversity and landscape value of the river corridors and measures to improve flood management, maintain the sensitive transition between urban and rural environment, and protect important views from within the town to these more rural areas</p> | <p>the northern edge, with consideration given to how the wider public can view and get access to the Shreen Water from the development (which is to be managed for biodiversity benefit), and the visual impact of the new housing as viewed from the river corridor. The development should not turn its back to the river.</p> |
| <p>23 and 26</p> | <p>Ensures development in the area south west of Bay includes a suitable landscaping scheme to retain the distinct character of Bay as a separate (historic) settlement</p> | <p>The landscaping scheme should address this point, with regard to the eastern edge of the development. This could provide further biodiversity and recreational benefits.</p> |
| <p>25 and 26</p> | <p>Ensures the density of new developments respects the qualities and character of nearby buildings and the area (and key buildings) in which it is situated. This includes generally not exceeding the height or massing of existing buildings in the immediate locality. New boundaries and changes to existing boundaries should be in keeping with the locality and/or enhance the street scene.</p> | <p>This is particularly relevant in terms of development adjoining Bay, which is at a much lower density. Guidance on the qualities and character of nearby buildings is given in Table 12.6. It is important that the development is not seen as a modern housing estate at its transition with the existing development at Bay. Irregular plots, local materials, boundary treatments and links to the rural roots of this area should all be considered.</p> |

Custom and self-build housing

- 6.9. Custom and self-build housing, simply put, is a home that is built by an individual (either acting alone or organised into groups) who intends to live there (for a minimum period of 3 years)¹. There are many routes to building your own home which have been categorised on the Government’s website - <http://www.selfbuildportal.org.uk/>
- 6.10. The Neighbourhood Plan group has collected evidence of demand for custom and self-build housing from over 30 households (in advance of the self build register now managed by the Local Planning Authority). Because the Local Plan allocates mainly larger housing sites in the Gillingham area, opportunities for custom builders through replacement or infill plots will be quite limited. As such, people looking to build such houses, particularly those with limited financial resources, will struggle to compete for these sites.
- 6.11. For these reasons, a supplementary policy is needed to ensure that some custom and self-build plots are made available where practical on the larger development sites (as a guide this means sites of 20 or more homes). As a general guide, it is expected that at least 5% of plots should be made available for sale to custom builders and be appropriately serviced – this is an approach that has been successfully adopted in other parts of the country. However it is accepted that market conditions, demand and viability and the type of

¹ For the purposes of this plan, we have used the definition of custom and self-build housing based on that set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2014) - housing built or commissioned by a person and occupied by that person as their sole or main residence for the duration of the clawback period (3 years).

housing provided will all need to be taken into account in deciding what may be reasonably required. Where the plots would meet affordable housing needs, these may be delivered as part of the requirement for affordable housing. And to ensure that the land is developed in a timely fashion, where plots have been made available and marketed appropriately for at least 12 months and not sold, the plot(s) may then be offered to the Council or a Housing Association (if they were provided in lieu of affordable housing) before being built out by the developer.

- 6.12. By having just 5% of homes delivered through large sites to be available to custom or self-builders, we would generate the potential for 90 plots or more, that would come forward over the period to 2031.

Policy 1. Custom and self-build housing
 On larger sites developers should make provision for custom and self-build housing.

- 6.13. To make sure that such provision does not adversely affect the delivery of the larger sites, it may also be appropriate to agree a design code and conditions requiring that the dwelling be completed within a reasonable period of a custom or self-builder purchasing a plot.

Flexibility in working / living accommodation

- 6.14. Another consideration in the internal design and layout of new housing is the flexibility for more people to work from home. So flexibility in designs is also a key consideration, to enable a building to readily adapt to the potential business needs of its future occupiers as well as their possible healthcare and social requirements. The provision of higher standards of access for those with mobility limitations (compared to building regulation requirements), the inclusion of space that could function effectively for homeworking, and the ability for accommodation to adapt to meet changing needs (such as future use of attic space, or subdivision to provide two smaller separately functioning units of accommodation) all provide for future flexibility in how the home can function. Building regulations now require building work to ensure a high-speed ready broadband connection is possible. Such changes can be very costly if not considered in the initial design.
- 6.15. The following policy simply makes clear that the decision-maker should take such benefits into account in assessing the scheme (as they would potentially be material considerations), and is therefore intended to encourage such designs.

Policy 2. Flexible living accommodation to suit all needs
 Where applicants can demonstrate that housing proposals will provide greater flexibility to adapt to changing needs of possible future occupants over and above building regulation requirements, such flexibility should be taken into account as a positive benefit in the assessment of the scheme.

Housing in the town centre area

- 6.16. The chapter on the town centre (see Chapter 8) includes a lot of detail about the changes that will be supported in the town centre, to strengthen the town centre as an attractive and vibrant destination. Part of this vibrancy is provided by having a reasonable number of homes in the town centre area, so that it continues to have activity throughout the day and into the evening. Having people living in the area means that, once shops or offices close,

the place does not become deserted. Many people will benefit from being able to live close to the shops and services that they might use on a daily basis.

- 6.17. Bringing back into use empty properties above the shops, and making the most of underused premises, is an obvious way to create this mix of typical town centre uses and residential uses. As such change to residential use for above ground floor level is welcomed if compatible with the existing mix of uses, and provided that they do not replace valued community assets (such as a key community facility).
- 6.18. In particular a mix of living and work accommodation, in the form of 'artisan' quarters, would be in keeping with the character of the town. Such smaller, more affordable workshop and retail spaces, linked with living accommodation, will provide an entrepreneurial environment for smaller businesses looking to establish and thrive.
- 6.19. Given the vitality that homes can bring to the town centre, it is also important that careful consideration is given to where such uses might be lost. The key issue here is whether the alternative proposals overall would maintain or even improve the amount of activity and vibrancy in the centre.

Policy 3. Residential uses in the Town Centre.

Residential use of accommodation on upper floor levels in the town centre will be supported provided that it would not result in the loss of a use that is otherwise protected (such as a community facility), and the residential use would not adversely affect an existing ground floor main town centre use.

'Artisan' quarters, providing modest sized workshop or retail spaces linked with living accommodation, should be encouraged.

Existing residential accommodation on upper floor levels should be retained unless the proposed replacement would provide an overall enhancement to the vitality of the town centre.

7. ECONOMY

ECONOMY: *Gillingham will have a flourishing and diverse local economy, with a wide range of jobs and training opportunities, based on our local strengths. These include an exceptional stream of young talent from Gillingham School, together with UK leading businesses in Life Science, Health and Beauty, Speciality Gloves and Luminaire Design and Manufacture.*

7.1. Gillingham has industry-leading businesses in life science, health and beauty, design and manufacturing, the best combined road and rail access in the strategically important south-west corridor, well placed development sites, all types of office and workspace accommodation, superfast broadband in the majority of the town, a flourishing sixth form, and relatively affordable housing.

7.2. As such it offers an attractive location for businesses looking to expand or relocate manufacturing and /or back office functions. It is, in essence, a fantastic place to invest.

7.3. Maintaining and growing local employment is a key factor in supporting the attractive character and economic health of this small but growing town. Local provision of apprentice and skill training is integral to this (see Policy 15).

Main employment sites

7.4. The main employment sites around the town are:

- > Brickfields Business Park
- > Brickfields Industrial Estate
- > Kingsmead Business Park (Park Farm)
- > Higher Ham Farm, Ham
- > Neals Yard Remedies, Peacemarsh
- > Station Road area

There are also smaller employment sites at Tomlins Lane, Shearstock Farm, Bowridge Hill and Lower Langham Farm. Most of these are assessed in the 2007 Employment Land Review, excepting some of the smaller sites.

7.5. These sites are home to many existing and expanding businesses, providing opportunities for further growth and investment. Most businesses locating here are employment uses,

What national policy says...

Support economic growth through the planning system (para 19)

Economic investment should not be over-burdened by planning policy expectations (para 21)

Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose (para 22)

Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside (para 28)

What the Local Plan says...

Policy 11 – refers to the development of Brickfields Business Park, the mixed-use regeneration of the Station Road area (with a focus on comparison retail and office uses), and the improvement of town centres as the main focus for retail, leisure and other commercial activities. It allows the small scale expansion of existing employment sites in the countryside. It also seeks to protect existing employment sites from other forms of development.

Policy 17 – also refers to the development of land on Kingsmead Business Park for a local centre and / or for a range of employment uses, and the development of land at Neal’s Yard Remedies, Peacemarsh for high value business

Policy 20 - Development in the countryside will only be permitted if it is of a type appropriate in the countryside or there is an ‘overriding need’ for it to be located in the countryside.

which are B-class uses (primarily offices, light and general industrial premises and storage / warehousing).

- 7.6. In addition, other uses that generate employment opportunities (such as healthcare and leisure facilities) exist in the town centre and within the wider area.
- 7.7. The Local Plan includes proposals for the expansion of Brickfields Business Park for employment uses, together with the mixed-use regeneration of the Station Road area (providing an alternative employment site more suited to office and comparison retail businesses). It also refers to the development of further employment land at Kingsmead Business Park.
- 7.8. These sites provide the main basis for supporting a flourishing and diverse local economy, with a wide range of jobs and training opportunities.
- 7.9. All of these existing and proposed employment sites will continue as key employment areas. Proposals for business expansion, new businesses and allied uses (education, training and healthcare, for instance) will be supported. The only area where a different approach may be appropriate is in the Station Road employment area. The area for employment uses has decreased from that shown in the 2003 Local Plan, as town centre retail has been built in much of the area north of Le Neubourg Way. The Station Road area which has also been identified for mixed use regeneration will also introduce residential uses in the area south of Le Neubourg Way, west of Station Road, and due to the town centre links the continued more general industrial and storage-based employment uses are therefore considered to be less compatible with the other uses in this area.
- 7.10. There may, on occasion, be possible issues that arise from business uses in this area, and it is important that these potential conflicts are recognised so that they can be addressed at the early planning stages. For example, where residential uses adjoin an existing employment area, increased noise levels from industrial processes could create unacceptable living conditions for existing residents, creating an amenity issue. Another issue might be the impact of increased levels of traffic, which could make a key pedestrian / cycle link much less attractive to its users. The Local Plan does have separate policies on amenity and providing and enhancing walking and cycling facilities in the main towns and in rural areas, but the following policy is intended to make clear how such conflicts should be considered.
- 7.11. However, as a general rule the expansion and improvement of existing business sites is something that is encouraged in the parish, as outlined in the following policy.

Policy 4. Support improvements in existing employment sites

Proposals to upgrade or redevelop existing employment sites that will provide more jobs, or flexible accommodation suitable for start-up businesses, will be supported unless such proposals are likely to:

- a) have a significant adverse impact on surrounding uses in terms of amenity; or
- b) have a significant adverse impact on the area’s pedestrian and cycle network in terms of safety and connectivity.

Employment sites in the town centre

- 7.12. The main consideration for proposals relating to employment (or the loss of employment) in the town centre is in terms of how they would impact on the vibrancy of the town centre. This matter is more appropriately dealt with under Policy 7 in Chapter 8. There is a specific policy in relation to the Station Road area.

Loss of employment land outside the Town Centre

- 7.13. It is not always easy to find new sites for employment, and therefore the loss of existing employment land to other uses is likely to mean local people may have to travel further to find employment, and undermine the successful links that have been created between local businesses and with the school. Keeping the right balance of jobs and homes is therefore an important component of a flourishing and diverse local economy.
- 7.14. The Local Plan policy on uses on employment sites recognises that some alternative uses may be permitted that would support businesses or provide a wider range of jobs, and lists these opportunities. One other scenario where the loss of such employment sites may provide an overall economic benefit to the town, would be where the proposed development would provide key transport infrastructure that would support the economy to such an extent that it would clearly further the objectives in this Neighbourhood Plan. One such example might be parking provision that would greatly ease traffic congestion in and around the town centre. This policy therefore adapts the approach taken in the Local Plan to allow such provision to be made, and also recognises the spatial strategy proposed for community venues. At the time of drafting the extension to the Brickfields Business Park had been identified as the preferred location in the Draft Waste Plan for a household recycling centre, and this would potentially be a suitable alternative community use.
- 7.15. Where an employment site becomes vacant, the site should be actively marketed at a reasonable price for at least twelve months without restriction; to enable alternative employment uses to come forward.

Policy 5. The loss of employment sites outside of the Town Centre

Existing employment sites must remain in employment (B Class) use unless the proposed use would support businesses and/or provide a wider range of jobs, and falls within one of the following categories:

- > community uses, including community halls (subject to Policy 16);
- > non-residential healthcare facilities;
- > education or training facilities;
- > small-scale retail, which is ancillary to a B Class use; and

transport infrastructure improvements.

Tourism and leisure business opportunities

- 7.16. Under the previous Local Plan there has been a policy aimed at landowners and farmers in the area of the former Gillingham Royal Forest area, to undertake woodland planting and support countryside recreational activities. The area has an interesting history – the Royal Forest was established as a royal hunting area in the early 13th century, and the extensive earthworks known as Kings Court Palace (just outside the parish) are where King John

constructed a fortified hunting lodge. The Forest itself extends beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area, and quite a lot of the area is no longer wooded (where areas were brought into agricultural use).

- 7.17. The intentions underlying this project are still valid today within the rural parts of the parish– the potential for farmers and landowners to use the countryside in a way that provides economic, recreational, landscape and heritage benefits. As such, the following policy has reviewed and carried forward the elements of that policy, in a manner appropriate to the neighbourhood plan area.

Policy 6. Forestry and tourism / recreation projects

Proposals that enhance the landscape and low-key recreational use of the countryside in keeping with the character of the area will be supported, particularly through:

- a) the provision of additional woodland planting in the Gillingham Royal Forest area.
- b) the provision or improvement of countryside recreational facilities.
- c) the provision of interpretative tourism/educational facilities in relation to the enjoyment and understanding of the countryside and heritage of the area.

8. RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRE USES

RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRE USES: *Gillingham will have a strong and vibrant town centre, where the variety of town centre businesses generates a positive atmosphere in the High Street, with activity during the day and at night time.*

8.1. As a small town, Gillingham benefits already from a wide range of convenience shopping within the boundaries of the Town Centre. In addition to the town centre area, there are also a number of smaller local centres serving the outlying residential areas, and a new local centre planned to serve the southern extension to the town.

What national policy says...

Planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period (23)

Planning policies should ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable (70)

What the Local Plan says...

Policy 11 - Tourist facilities and larger hotels will be encouraged in town centre locations in accordance with the sequential approach to the location of town centre uses

Policy 12 – makes clear that the town centre boundaries and retail frontages will shortly be reviewed unless defined in a Neighbourhood Plan. It also sets out the type of uses that will be allowed in these areas (primarily retail and other main town centre uses).

Development and change of use in the Town Centre

8.2. The significant increase in population, that will happen as the southern extension is developed, will generate further investment in the town centre over the plan period. As such it is likely that a number of sites in and around the town centre may be redeveloped, and this plan can help make sure that these changes support the objective of a strong and vibrant town centre, where the variety of town centre businesses generates a good day time economy and a safe and social night time economy with a positive atmosphere.

8.3. The town centre has several different parts – the historic core to the western end of the High Street, the main retail area of the High Street with a mix of traditional and more modern shop units and residential uses, the area bounded by Le Neubourg Way and the River Stour (where Waitrose and the Library are located), and the clustering of more modern large retail outlets on the route to the transport hub at Gillingham Station. Just outside but well related to the town centre, is the education and leisure hub on Hardings Lane.

Town centre uses...

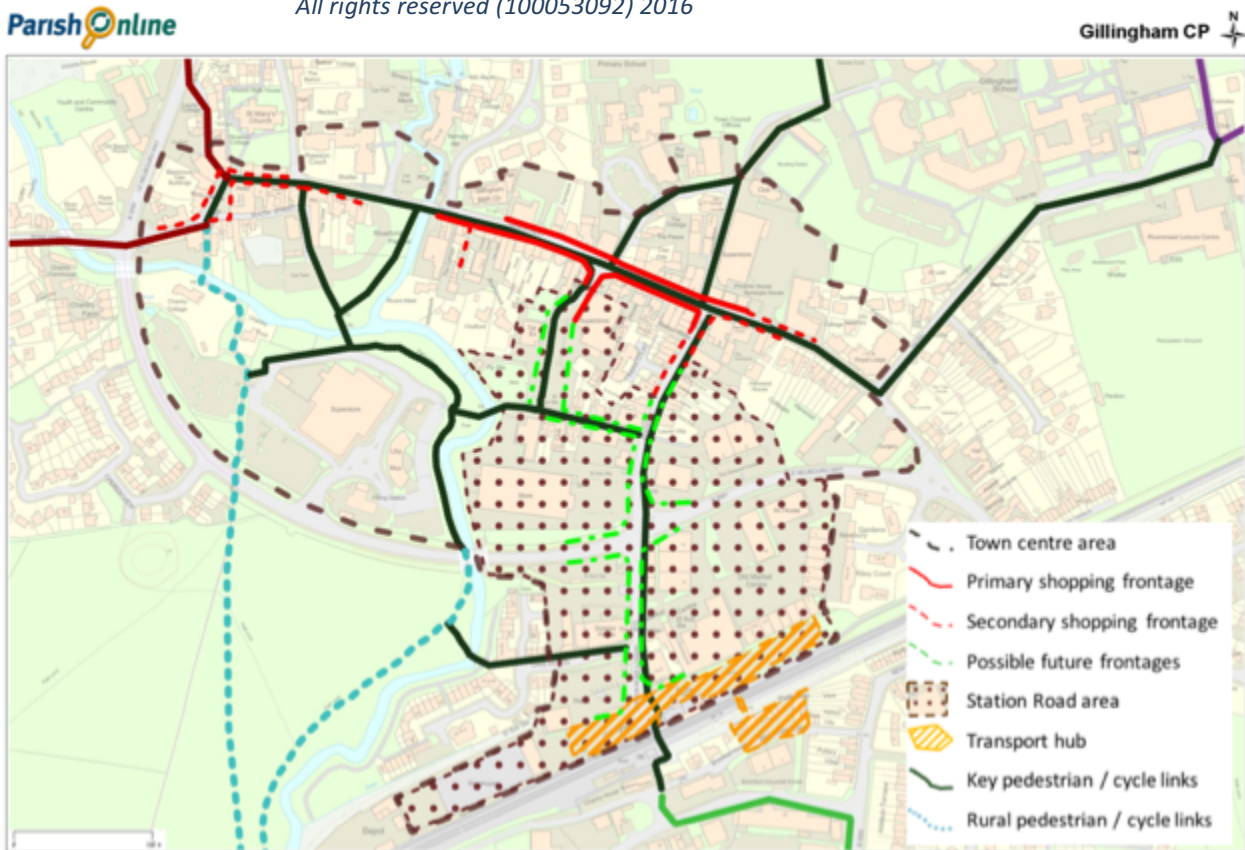
are defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. They include shops, restaurants / cafes, leisure / entertainment facilities (including cinemas, bars and pubs and health and fitness centres), offices, hotels and conference facilities and arts / culture venues such as galleries and concert halls.

8.4. A town centre area has been defined for the first time in this Neighbourhood Plan, providing a useful steer as to where town centre uses would be supported. For example, the town currently lacks a central hotel to enable it to capitalize on local tourism attractions and its unique position in North Dorset served both by a main line railway and a significant trunk road to (and from) the South East and South West. This use would best be located within the town centre area. This area has considerable scope for accommodating town centre uses. It includes the Station Road area which is an existing employment site,

but which has already started to transform towards town centre uses through the permissions granted for retailing on land north of Le Neubourg Way, and the proposals for mixed use regeneration on land to the south.

- 8.5. The main shopping frontages have been updated to reflect the shift that has happened over the past 10 years, with the focus of traditional shops in the High Street now primarily around the School Road / Station Road area. The building of the larger retail units off Le Neubourg Way has also drawn quite a lot of shoppers into this southern part of the town centre, and we hope that further development in this area will create a better, more vibrant town centre, through enhanced pedestrian links connecting the station through to the High Street, providing an attractive environment where more people will want to spend time exploring and shopping.
- 8.6. The primary shopping area has not been defined in this Neighbourhood Plan, but it is hoped that this additional work will be undertaken as part of the Local Plan Review, backed up by more up to date retail study than was available at the time. It is understood the Local Planning Authority are commissioning a Retail Study.

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|--|--|
| <p>Primary Shop Frontages... <i>are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods</i></p> | <p>Town centre area... <i>includes the areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area</i></p> |
| <p>Secondary Shop Frontages... <i>provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses</i></p> | <p>Permitted development rights... <i>allow some changes of use including shops to some other town centre uses, but not if the change would have an undesirable impact on the key shopping area</i></p> |

- 8.7. It will be important to make the most of opportunities that will help enhance the character of the town centre area (particularly in the replacement of unsympathetic modern developments or through supporting the potential relocation of the more unneighbourly employment uses to other key employment sites outside of the town centre area), and to improve pedestrian links between Waitrose and the town centre, between the Station and the town centre, and between the town centre and the leisure and education facilities off School Lane and Harding’s Lane. These main pedestrian routes are dealt with in more detail under Policy 12 in Chapter 9.
- 8.8. Where buildings are no longer suitable for re-use (for example, because the design of the building doesn’t meet the requirement of most modern retail outlets), they can be redeveloped (unless they are of particular historic interest), providing an opportunity to incorporate retail or other town centre uses, potentially with flats or apartments on the upper floors or in areas away from the main pedestrian thoroughfares.
- 8.9. The design of shop frontages and buildings fronting onto the main shopping areas and key pedestrian routes is also important in how the town feels. Blank facades (either through large expanses of wall, or through blocked-out shop windows or the use of security shutters) can make an area uninteresting, and where footfall levels may be low at central times of the day or evening, such designs can also contribute to a feeling that the area is deserted, and the perceived lack of surveillance can increase fear of crime.

Policy 7. Development within the Town Centre boundary.

Main town centre uses, including new retail outlets, offices, leisure facilities and large-scale tourist accommodation (such as a hotel), will be supported in the Town Centre area (as defined in Figure 8.1).

Retail uses should be focused along the primary shopping frontages (as defined in Figure 8.1). The loss of retail outlets to residential use on the ground floor in areas of primary and secondary shopping frontages will be resisted.

New residential dwellings can come forward through the use of upper floors (in line with Policy 2) or as part of a mix use scheme with other town centre uses, or on sites away from the main pedestrian routes and shopping frontages, to provide a suitably vibrant mix of uses in this area.

New uses, or the intensification or expansion of existing uses, that are likely to generate unpleasant emissions, excessive noise or vibration levels, or significant levels of lorry movements, will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impact on the town centre environment, particularly in terms of amenity and safety of the main pedestrian routes through the area.

General industrial and storage / warehouses are encouraged to relocate to more suitable employment sites outside of the town centre area.

The design of shop frontages and buildings fronting onto the main shopping / pedestrian routes should add visual interest to the street scene. Larger premises should be designed to incorporate elements that break up their mass, in a manner that is sympathetic to the historic character of the town centre. Designs (including the use of any blinds or shutters) that result in blank facades facing onto public areas including the main pedestrian routes will not be supported.

Town centre redevelopment opportunities

- 8.10. Station Road has been identified for redevelopment. This has the potential to create an attractive gateway to the town centre (particularly as the main route in for those arriving by bus or rail), providing a modern shopping and business area linking to the more traditional and historic high street. The potential redevelopment of this area will take some planning and will depend on the aspirations of the different landowners and tenants. So it is more likely to take place gradually, as and when opportunities arise and alternative locations are found for existing businesses that may want to relocate. Some time may also need to be spent cleaning up land contamination from previous land uses.
- 8.11. The Gillingham Growth Study undertaken by Atkins (2009) provides some useful ideas for how this area could be re-developed. It recognises that some of the existing large retail outlets on the corner sites where Station Road meets Le Neubourg Way are to some extent underutilised and in design terms add little to this part of the town centre. There is an opportunity for a comprehensive mixed use redevelopment of Station Road between the Station and Buckingham Road, which could include about 7,000sqm of retail units (mainly comparison shops) and cafés / restaurants and perhaps a new, modern hotel, and about the same amount of office space and workshops, together with around 200 new homes. All this would need to go alongside improvement to the public realm (perhaps a new public square and much better and attractive pedestrian connections), and link to the station transport hub. This could include up to 7,452sqm of retail floor space and 7,000 m² of office floor space. A scheme in this area would entail some loss of existing retail and sui generis occupiers although there would be a significant net increase in provision overall and address issues relating to representation of national multiples and the quality of the town centre environment.
- 8.12. This type of development can't happen in a piecemeal fashion – there needs to be a comprehensive plan worked up with the major landowners, transport providers, the Local Planning Authority, the Town Council and involving retail representatives and the local community.

Policy 8. Station Road Mixed Use Area

Development in this area should be compatible with the main aims for its mixed use regeneration, i.e.:

- a) To provide for the comprehensive mixed use redevelopment of underutilised land in the area, to comprise a mix of town centre uses including retail units, cafés / restaurants, a new, modern hotel (if there is sufficient developer interest), office space, land for informal recreation including an equipped play area and around 200 new homes.
- b) To provide an improved transport hub at the station in line with Policy 10.
- c) To rationalise and improve the overall car parking provision within and adjoining the town centre in line with Policy 11.
- d) To improve pedestrian linkages and movement within the area and linking the Station to the High Street, including suitable public open spaces within this network of routes.
- e) To direct new retail frontages to within the area of search identified in Figure 8.1, which will become part of the primary and secondary shopping frontages.

Continued...

Policy 8 continued...

- f) To ensure that existing and proposed uses are compatible in terms of any noise, disturbance that they may generate.
- g) To reflect the heritage and character of Gillingham in the design, whilst allowing for a modern, forward-looking scheme.

A comprehensive masterplan prepared in partnership with the major landowners, transport providers, the Local Planning Authority and Town Council and involving retail representatives and the local community will be prepared to help guide these proposals.

- 8.13. There are other, smaller sites within the town centre area that provide potential opportunities for redevelopment. The Town Council welcomes approaches from new businesses looking to establish in the town centre and will direct them to any potential opportunity sites where these exist.

Historic hub

- 8.14. The historic Town Square and Town Meadow currently offer recreational activities such as an arts centre and galleries, music and cultural events, pubs and restaurants, headquarters of the Gillingham Imperial Silver Band as well as daytime professional services. There is scope to encourage similar businesses and activities into this area and promote it as a visitor destination for both day and night-time activities. The secondary shopping frontage designation in this area provides the flexibility for places to change to uses such as restaurants and wine bars. This offer will add value to the High Street commercial activities with an improved street-scene to better link the two areas as a destination for leisure and entertainment.
- 8.15. In recognition of the historic interest of this area, a Conservation Enhancement Plan has been drawn up to develop the area as a destination as part of the High Street offer to help increase footfall and extend visitor stay which will contribute to the economic activity in the town, more detail of which is given in Policy 27 in Chapter 13.

Retail and other town centre uses outside of the Town Centre

- 8.16. Outside of the town centre there are local centres at Lodbourne and Broad Robin. The cluster of medical facilities and units at Peacemarsch is beginning to establish as a local centre in that part of the town. There is also a new local centre planned to serve the southern extension to the town. Although the Forge Garage Shop in Milton closed in 2016, it did act as a small hub for that centre, and a similar centre would be appropriate for that village if viable in the future. These centres are shown in Figure 9.5.
- 8.17. These local centres are important in providing a focus and identity to the different parts of the town, as well as providing convenient local facilities for nearby residents. So although overall the Town Centre includes sufficient opportunities for town centre uses looking to locate to Gillingham, there may be opportunities for smaller businesses to start up or locate to the local centres.
- 8.18. Development in these locations should be of a type and scale appropriate for the local neighbourhood (such as a local hairdressers, pub or pharmacy), and not of a scale to serve a much wider catchment as this would undermine the vitality of the town centre. As a

guide, retail units should be no more than 280m² (which would be above the average size of a typical local retail unit, but below the size where such premises are restricted by Sunday trading laws).

Policy 9. Town centre uses outside of the Town Centre

Development proposals for shops, financial and professional services, food and drink, or leisure and community uses may be located within or adjoining the local centres in Milton-on-Stour, Lodbourne, Broad Robin and the new southern neighbourhood centre (as broadly shown in Figure 9.5) if they are appropriate in type and scale for the local neighbourhood, and do not undermine the vitality of the town centre.

The loss of town centre uses in the defined local centres will be resisted.

9. TRANSPORT

TRANSPORT: *Gillingham will have a safe and resilient transport network (i.e. roads, cycleways and footpaths), with particularly good walking and cycle links between neighbourhoods, the town and its surroundings, and convenient public transport services to take people from near their homes to jobs, schools, healthcare and other services.*

9.1. One of the Town’s biggest assets in comparison with other North Dorset towns is the railway link to Salisbury, Yeovil and further afield to Dorchester, Weymouth, London and Exeter. The station forms the basis of a transport hub linking Gillingham to other parts of the Blackmore Vale.

9.2. Links to the A303 road corridor from Exeter and London also makes it highly accessible, which connects to the east through Wyke (B3081) or north towards Mere (B3092), and bypasses the town centre (Le Neubourg Way) to connect with Shaftesbury and the south east. Parts of the town centre relief road and the road junctions immediately south of the railway line can become congested at peak times, as there is no alternative main route across the railway line.

9.3. Making the most of the railway connection and walking and cycling links around the town form the main basis for improvements to the transport network. Another issue is the need to better manage the car parking provision in the town centre.

What national policy says...

Encourage solutions which reduce car trips and congestion (para 30)

Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people (para 35)

What the Local Plan says...

Policy 13 - ensure that the necessary transport infrastructure is put into place to support growth, development and North Dorset's economy

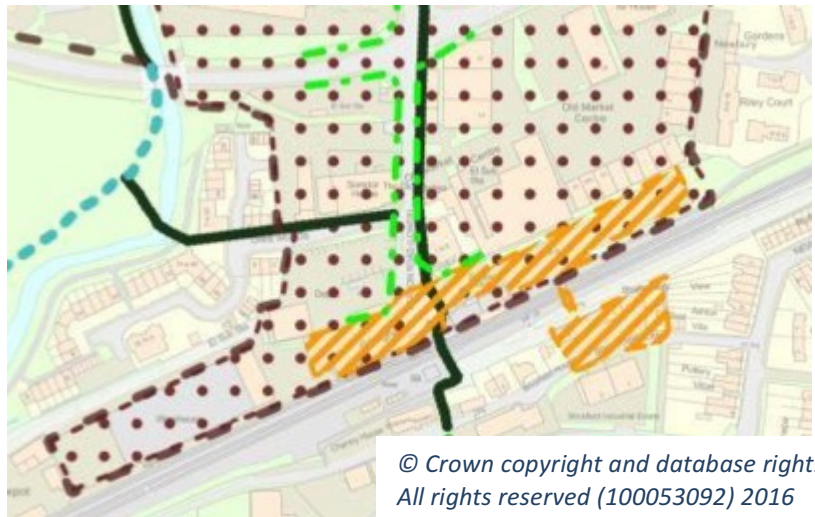
Policy 17 - provide a new link road between the B3081 and B3092 through the SSA to the south of the town; enhance the Railway Station as a public transport hub; improve the Town Centre’s pedestrian and cycle links with the railway station and Waitrose and include pedestrian and cycle links to key destinations, such as the town centre, employment areas, schools, and other community facilities.

Figure 9.1 – Station Road Transport Hub

Station Road Transport Hub

9.4. Creating an integrated hub for public transport at the station will strengthen its benefits to the town and local economy. Key requirements for such a hub include consideration of all the following points:

- > sufficient car parking and set-down area as close as feasible to the station entrance for current and future anticipated demand.
- > sufficient space to accommodate ‘waiting’ buses and taxis to facilitate more effective links between the different services.



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- > warm and welcoming shelter, and provision of rest facilities (toilets, food and drink) so that travellers can wait in comfort for services and onward connections.
- > easy and safe access by car, bus, taxi, walking or cycling providing connections to the High Street.

9.5. The comprehensive redevelopment of the Station Road area will need to include sufficient space for these requirements as part of the long term strategy for the town.

Policy 10. Station Road Transport Hub

The redevelopment of sites within the Station Hub area shown on Figure 9.1 should be compatible with the main aims of use as an integrated transport hub, i.e.:

- a) sufficient parking and set-down area as close as feasible to the station entrance for current and future anticipated demand
- b) sufficient space to accommodate 'waiting' buses and taxis to facilitate more effective links between the different services
- c) warm and welcoming shelter, and provision of rest facilities (toilets, food and drink) so that travellers can wait in comfort for services and onward connections
- d) easy and safe access by car, bus, taxi, walking or cycling providing connections to the High Street

Where development is proposed within the Station Hub area, early consultation should be undertaken with Highways Authority, Network Rail, rail, bus and taxi operators, the Local Planning Authority and Gillingham Town Council to ensure that adverse impacts on the operation of this transport hub are avoided.

Parking in and around the Town Centre

9.6. The Local Authority owns and manage three car parks around the town centre:

- > Chantry Fields car park (by Waitrose) – approximately 70 spaces
- > Gillingham High Street car park – approximately 70 spaces
- > Gas Lane (St. Mary's Place) car park – approximately 20 spaces

9.7. In addition there are spaces at the Station car park, and also large customer car parks associated with the main superstores (Waitrose, Lidl, Asda and the former Co-op).

9.8. Sufficient and convenient car parking is an important factor in the vitality of a town centre. At the time the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared, some of the car parks appear underused, and the piecemeal nature of provision (some available to the public and some privately held, as well as on-street parking) also leads to more car movements around the centre which could potentially be avoided. Other areas would benefit from increased car parking. Hardings Lane, just outside the town centre area, is one such example, where the incremental increase in the education and leisure facilities has not always been fully matched by increased parking provision in the past, and changing transport arrangements (such as the withdrawal of free bus transport for sixth formers) has added to car-based trips.

9.9. There is an opportunity for car parking to be reviewed, potentially releasing some of the less valued sites for alternative town centre uses, provided that these are balanced with sufficient provision in the best locations.

9.10. The Mary Portas Review made clear the importance of a flexible, well communicated parking offer for the success of the high street. Although parking charges are not

something that can be controlled through planning conditions, those organisations that provide the various public and customer parking areas around the town centre are encouraged to work together to ensure that the pricing of parking for visitors is clear and either free or reasonably cheap, so as to ensure the town centre remains a popular destination.

Policy 11. Parking provision within and adjoining the Town Centre area
 Development that would rationalise and improve the overall car parking provision within and adjoining the town centre, including increased provision in the vicinity of Hardings Lane, will be supported.

The road network, and alternative pedestrian and cycle links

9.11. The study *Assessing the growth potential of Gillingham* undertaken by Atkins in 2009, highlighted some key issues to the transport network at the local level in and around the town, as illustrated in Figure 9.2

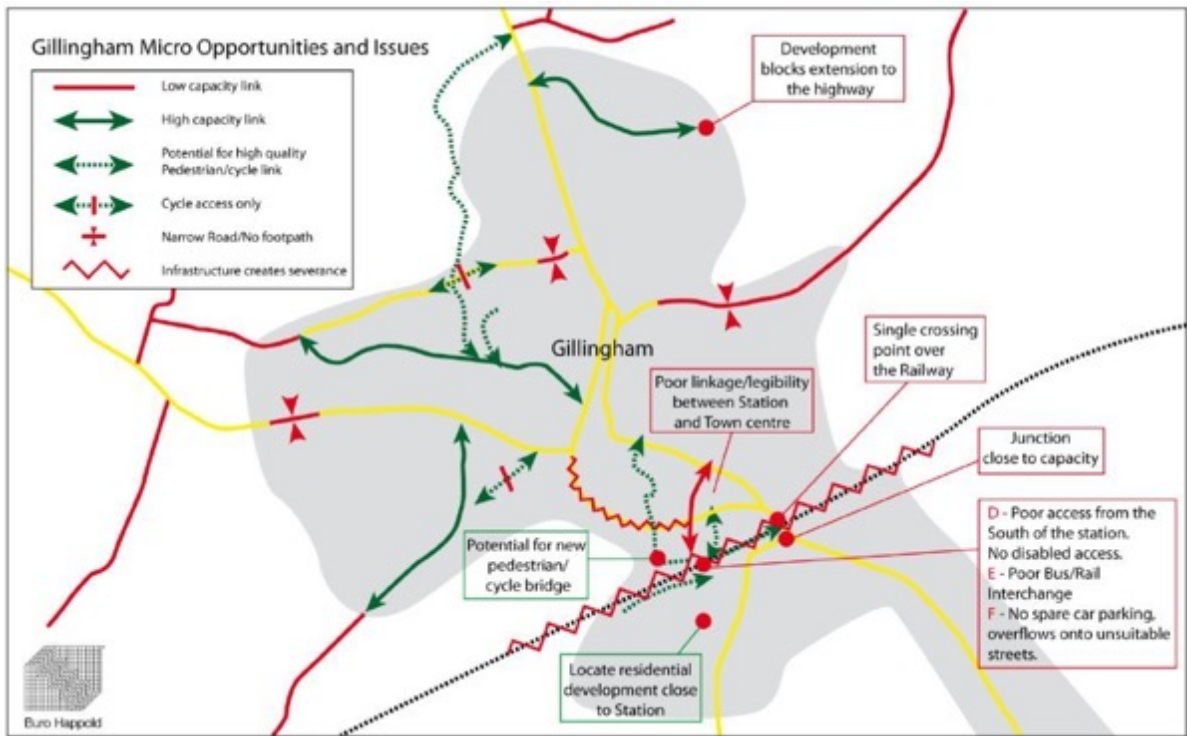


Figure 9.2 – Gillingham Transport Opportunities and Issues

9.12. The report summarised the major transport issues associated with the growth of Gillingham as being the impact on the New Road/Shafesbury Road junction, which even in 2009 was already operating at close to capacity, and the link capacity of the B3081 between Gillingham and Shaftesbury. Atkins suggested that a southern route linking the B3081 with the B3092 would make an improvement at the strategic level (this will be delivered within the Southern Extension) and, at the local level, development needs to be permeable and link to and enhance the existing pedestrian and cycle network. It also suggested that a number of pedestrian/cycle bridges and Toucan crossings could reduce the severance caused by roads and railway. This highlighted the need for the Neighbourhood Plan to consider practical safe and attractive alternatives for pedestrians and cyclists travelling to and between the town centre and outlying areas of the town.

- 9.13. The improvement and further development of the pedestrian and cycle networks throughout and beyond the parish is central to the Neighbourhood Plan’s objective of having a safe and resilient transport network, with particularly good walking and cycle links between neighbourhoods, the town and its surroundings. Figure 9.5 shows the key footpaths and cycle path connections that should provide this alternative network, and link with the local centres, the main employment areas and the wider countryside (an important feature noted in the Town Design Statement). These are explained in more detail in Table 9.3 and on a map at Figure 9.4. A number of these improvements will provide safe routes to the primary and secondary schools.
- 9.14. Parts of these routes already exist, and other parts still need to be improved or implemented (and therefore their alignment is indicative at this stage). The Town Council will work with the local landowners and the Highway Authority to bring these new or improved routes forward, potentially using some of the infrastructure funds for this purpose. A few of the rural links lie partly outside the Neighbourhood Plan area, and proposals for such routes cannot therefore be required in this plan. However they are shown as aspirations in terms of the completeness of the network, and it is hoped that these may be developed through joint working with those parishes. This includes part of the eastern perimeter link (in the area of King’s Court Palace), and wider routes linking with Motcombe and Madjeston.

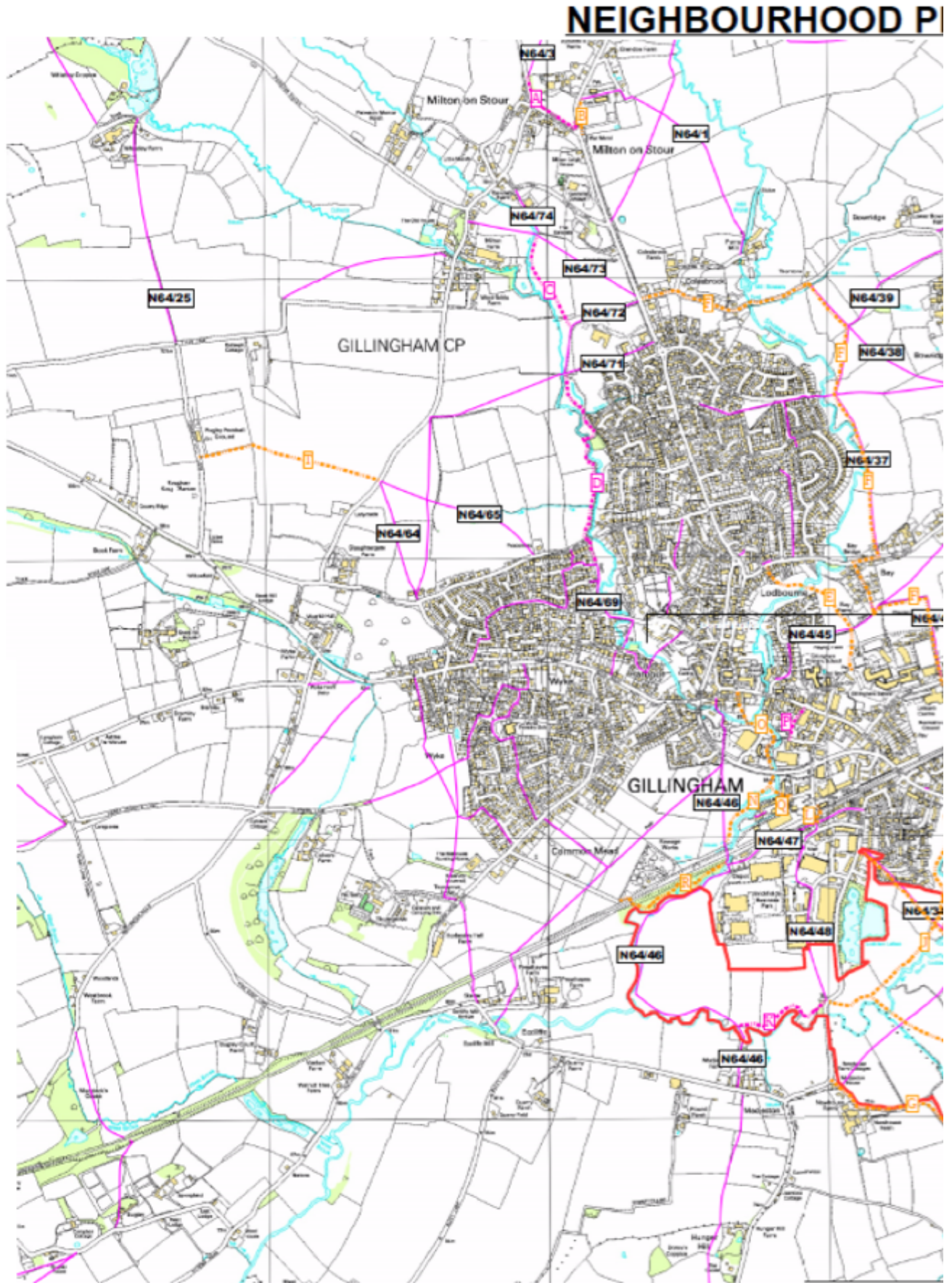
Table 9.3 –Improvements to Walking and Cycle Links

Note: These routes are indicative only and alternative routes may be preferable

| | |
|----|---|
| a) | Establish a pavement footpath running from the southern end of Footpath N64/3 at its junction with Martin's Lane in Milton-on-Stour along Martin's Lane and Post Office Road to the junction with the B3092 where it would join up with the pavement running north along the western side of the B3092 and a controlled road crossing to join up with the northern end of the traffic free cycle and walk way on which runs parallel to the B3092 on its eastern side. |
| b) | Extend the traffic free cycle and walk way which runs parallel to the eastern side of the B3092 from its northern limit to the join the western end of Footpath N64/1 just south of Milton Church. |
| c) | Re-route the southern section of Footpath N64/73, from its junction with Footpath N64/74, parallel to the River Stour to join Footpath N64/72 at the point it turns south. |
| d) | Designate the existing path, from in the north, the junction of Footpaths N64/71 and N64/72, along the banks of the River Stour to the junction with Footpath N64/69 approximately 90m south of Wavering Lane East, as a footpath and cycleway. |
| e) | Establish a footpath and cycleway from 20 Bay Road across a new bridge over the River Shreen to a new junction with Footpath N64/45 at the north-east corner of Gillingham Primary School playing fields and onwards across the fields to a junction with School Road. |
| f) | Establish a new cycle route around the north eastern periphery of the town from the junction of B3092 and Purns Mill Lane in the north to eastern end of Hardings Lane in the south. The proposed cycle route would be achieved by designating the road from the junction with B3092 along Purns Mill Lane, across the ford to the junction with Footpath N64/38 opposite Thorntons as cycle route and re-classifying parts of Footpaths N64/38, N64/39, N64/37 and N64/44 as a right of way cycle tracks and designating part of Bay Road and Bay Lane as a cycle route. |
| g) | Establish a new right of way footpath and cycle track from the eastern end of Hardings Lane to a point just north of Kingscourt Bridge at a new junction with Footpath N69/20 and Bridleway N69/6. The proposed cycleway would be achieved by creating a new right of way for pedestrians and cyclists from the end of Hardings Lane along the track towards Woodwater Farm and underneath the railway line where it crosses the River Lodden to a junction with |

| |
|---|
| <p>Footpath N69/20, along Footpath N69/20 from this point to its southern end at Kingscourt Bridge, then on a new right of way footpath and cycle track from Kingscourt Bridge south east along the north east boundaries of the existing houses on Fernbrook Lane and Cale Way to the area of Park Farm buildings, then across the B3091 into Cole Street Lane to its junction with B3092. The exact route between Kingscourt Bridge and Cole Street Lane will depend on details in the Masterplan Framework for the Southern Extension.</p> |
| <p>h) Create new traffic free footpaths and cycle tracks connecting the area of Kingsmead roundabout on the B3091 to Footpath N64/48 in the area of Madjeston Bends (just north of the B3092 crossing of the River Lodden). These paths and tracks would need to connect to existing rights of way in the Southern Extension and their exact routes will be specified in the Masterplan Framework.</p> |
| <p>i) Establish new right of way footpath and cycle track from Kingscourt Bridge along the west bank of the River Lodden to the Lodden Bridge on Shaftesbury Road.</p> |
| <p>j) Establish new right of way footpath and cycle track from the Lodden Bridge on Shaftesbury Road along the west bank of the River Lodden to Footpath N64/34 and onwards to connect to the new routes created at g). above.</p> |
| <p>k) Establish a new right of way footpath from the southern end of Footpath N64/48 running westwards along the northern bank of the River Stour to a junction with Footpath N64/46 north of Madjeston Farm.</p> |
| <p>l) Establish a new foot and cycle right of way from the railway station south across the railway line to a new junction with Footpaths N64/47 and N64/48.</p> |
| <p>m) Re-classify Footpath N64/34 (runs through Addison Close) as a cycle track.</p> |
| <p>n) Establish a new foot and cycle right of way from a point on Footpath N64/46 approximately 25m north of the railway line, along the west bank of the River Stour, to the northern side of the Le Neubourg Way bridge over the river.</p> |
| <p>o) Designate the path along the west bank of the River Stour from Le Neubourg Way bridge to the footbridge over the Lodden that leads onto the Town Meadow as a foot and cycle public right of way.</p> |
| <p>p) Establish a footpath right of way from the west end of Buckingham Road across the “Co-op” car park to the High Street.</p> |
| <p>q) Establish a foot and cycle crossing over the River Stour from a point on the new right of way established at n). above, to a point opposite Oake Woods on the traffic free walking and cycling route on the east bank of the river.</p> |
| <p>r) Designate the path through Withy Wood as foot and cycle right of way.</p> |
| <p>s) Support the Motcombe Cycleway project by re-classifying Bridlepath N69/6 so that cyclists have an equal priority to other users.</p> |
| <p>t) Extend Footpaths N64/64 and N64/65 from their north eastern ends at Milton Lane, eastwards across farmland to North Dorset Rugby Football Club house. This would also allow connectivity northwards along Longbury Hill Lane with Footpath N64/25 at its southern most point on Field Lane.</p> |

Figure 9.4 Map of Improvements to Walking and Cycling Links



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Figure 9.4 Map of Improvements to Walking and Cycling Links

LAN POLICY SUGGESTIONS

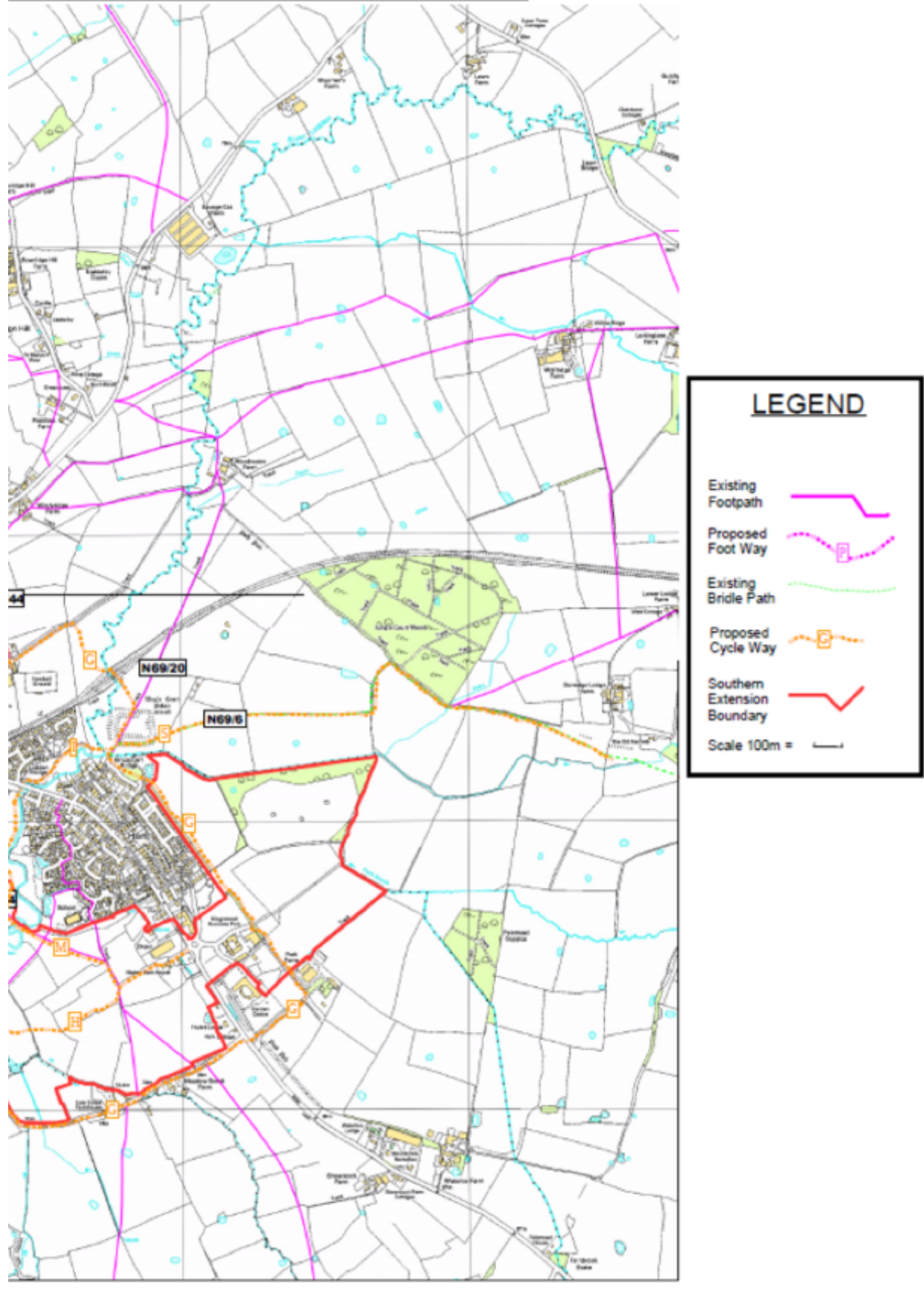
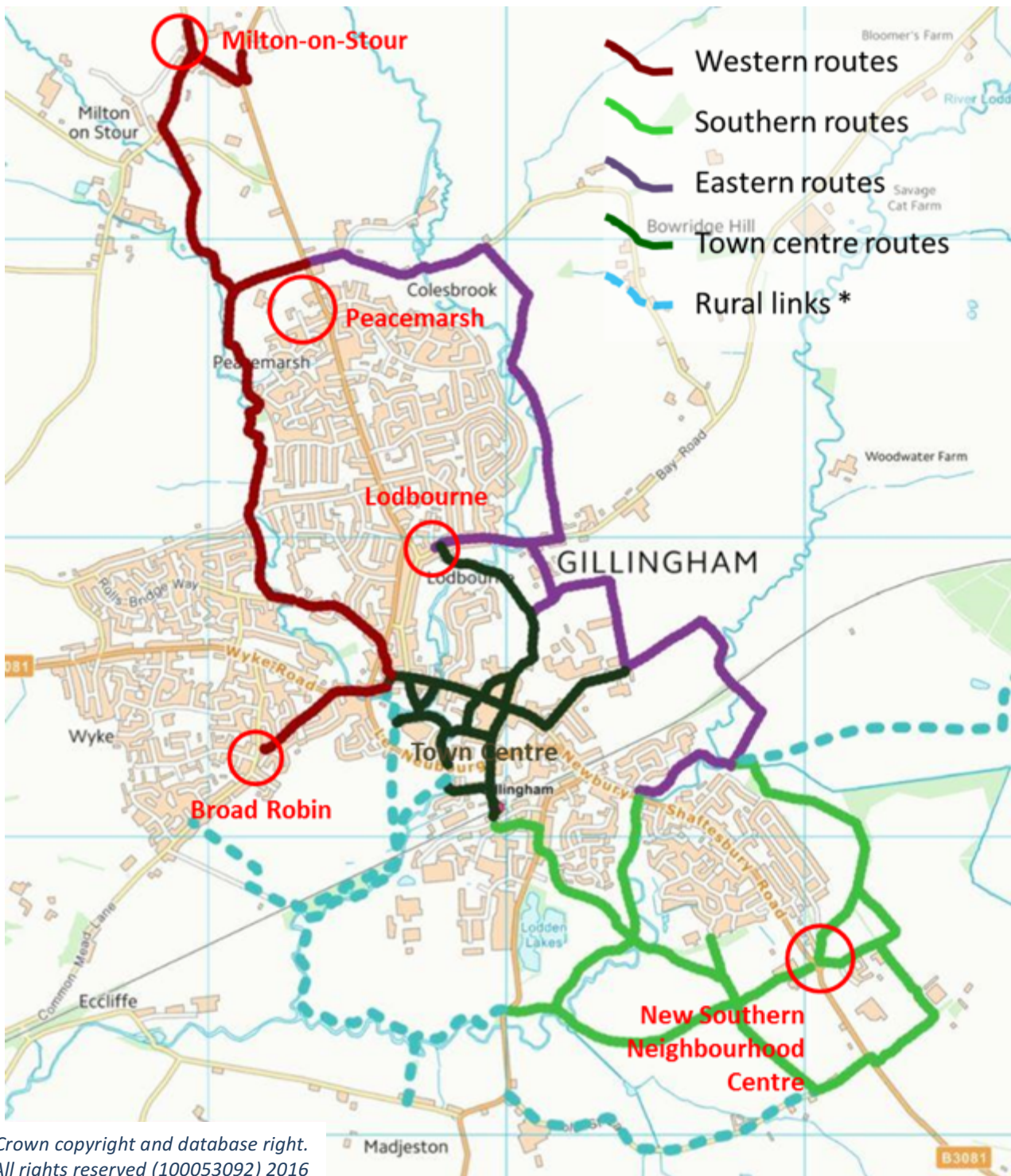


Figure 9.5 Key footpath / cycle network and local centres



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9.15. Development sites may include land that could provide a new or improved link as part of this network, or funding may be obtained (potentially as mitigation where proposals may otherwise exacerbate problems with the existing road network), to help deliver the necessary improvements for delivering this key alternative pedestrian and cycle network.

Policy 12. The road network, and alternative pedestrian and cycle links

The provision of the alternative pedestrian and cycle network as shown in Figure 9.4 will be supported. Where opportunities exist, developments should help deliver improvements to and connect with this network.

Roads, pedestrian and cycle links in new development

- 9.16. It is important that when new development comes forward, it is designed to fit within the existing road hierarchy to enable ease of movement for vehicles and pedestrians, and to help people understand what type of area they are in and which are the main routes through or out of that area. This means that more residential neighbourhoods should have streets designed as places (rather than highways), and connections onto the main arteries designed to cater for the smooth flow of traffic (but not sever important cycle and pedestrian connections). The placing of key buildings, other landmark features and the treatment of views as seen from the routes through the development are also important in helping people find their way about.
- 9.17. The design of roads in new development should therefore respect the existing road hierarchy, with primary and link roads providing a clear and navigable route through the town for all motor vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, and local roads designed primarily to create a safe and attractive pedestrian environment. The permeability of the network (having a good choice of links through) is also important, particularly for pedestrians. Excessive hard shared surfaces and narrow winding roads with no clear visibility of pedestrian movements should be avoided.
- 9.18. These points reflect the principles included in the Manual for Streets 2, which can be summarised as:
- > Considering the needs of pedestrian first
 - > Recognising the importance of streets as spaces for social interaction
 - > Recognising the importance of designs that are legible and help with way-finding, and reflecting and supporting pedestrian and cyclist desire lines
 - > Creating networks of streets that provide permeability and connectivity
 - > Moving away from standard designs to take a collaborative approach that encourages innovation, recognises local character, and minimises clutter

Policy 13. Road designs in new development

The design of roads in new development should respect the existing road hierarchy, with primary and link roads providing a clear and navigable route through the town for all motor vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, and local roads designed primarily to create a safe, permeable and attractive pedestrian environment. Excessive hard shared surfaces and narrow winding roads with no clear visibility of pedestrian movements should be avoided.

10. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

COMMUNITY FACILITIES: *The infrastructure needed to support sustainable growth will be provided ‘in sync’ with new developments, providing excellent opportunities for local healthcare, education and training, community, leisure, sport and cultural activities, that enable young and older people to play a full and active part in community life. RiversMeet will form the basis of a multi-use community hub. This facility, along with other valued services (such as the Library and Museum) will be celebrated and cherished. Good use will be made of facilities through careful planning, and services and facilities will have a high profile and will be readily available to visitors, businesses and local residents, at a place and time convenient to them. There will be plenty of places for clubs and activities to operate from.*

10.1. Gillingham has a number of community facilities, such as meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. These are a real asset to local residents, and much valued.

10.2. The significant increase in population that will happen as the southern extension is developed will increase demand for a range of community facilities. This is good news where those facilities are looking to generate additional income to improve or modernise, but in some cases will mean that existing facilities become over-subscribed.

10.3. The way some facilities are run is also changing. Health and social services are undergoing a major review, and education provision is also changing with the introduction of academies and free schools. This makes it difficult to plan with certainty, but highlights the need for the Neighbourhood Plan to be flexible to deliver the best solutions in the long term.

What national policy says...

Planning policies should plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities and local services, ensure that they are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and guard against their unnecessary loss, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs (para 70)

What the Local Plan says...

Policy 14 – the level of social infrastructure across the area is maintained and enhanced through the retention and improvement of existing facilities and new provision, where required.

Policy 17 - To support growth proposals will include the further improvement or expansion of the existing facilities at RiversMeet and the provision of a new community hall on the site; a new community hall, 2 form entry primary school and a new doctor’s surgery in the local centre to be provided as part of the southern extension; and the expansion of St Mary The Virgin Primary School and Gillingham School

Health and Social Care

10.4. Existing healthcare and social care services in the local area currently include one GP practice with two surgeries (at Peacemarsh Surgery and The Barn Surgery at Newbury), three pharmacies, two dental practices, opticians and a range of nursing and residential care homes. The nearest hospital with an Accident and Emergency department is about 20 miles away in Yeovil.

10.5. The provision of health facilities and social services to enable integrated, accessible and appropriate service to meet the needs of local residents is a key aim of the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan. The provision of new or improved facilities will need to factor in changes in the local population, which will include an increasing number of more elderly residents (with people living longer).

- 10.6. Having assessed the current capacity in health care provision, the Local Plan identifies the need for a new doctor’s surgery, to be located in the new local centre to cater primarily for residents in the southern extension to the town. The Dorset Clinical Services Review was launched in October 2014 in response to major challenges which face health and care provision, including a growing population with more people living longer, an increasing demand on services and a potential funding gap of more than £150m per year by 2020. The review, *Improving Dorset’s Healthcare*, in conjunction with Dorset CCG *Primary Care Commissioning Strategy and Plan*, contains substantive proposals which have important implications for future health and wellbeing provision, particularly bringing services out of acute hospitals into the locality and offering more services closer to home.

Policy 14. New and improved health and social care services

The provision of improved health and social care services will be supported, particularly where this will break down the barriers in how care is provided between family doctors and hospitals, between physical and mental health, between health and social care and enable better care to be delivered locally.

A suitable building (with associated land) for health and social care provision, will be delivered in the local centre of the Southern Extension, to help meet the expanding health and social care needs of the Neighbourhood Plan area and, potentially, neighbouring towns and villages.

Education and Training

- 10.7. There are four primary schools in the Gillingham area (Gillingham Primary School, Wyke Primary School, St Mary The Virgin CE VA Primary School and Milton-on-Stour CE VA Primary School) which feed into Gillingham School. Gillingham School includes a sixth form, and serves a much wider area than just Gillingham. In the past, St Martin's House in Queen Street was run as an Adult Education Centre. There are also four nursery schools operating locally.
- 10.8. The library provides a valuable learning resource for the community, as does the museum (these are both listed as cultural venues in the following section).
- 10.9. Having assessed the current capacity in education provision, the Local Plan identifies the need for a 2 form entry primary school within the southern extension, and financial contributions to fund the expansion of St Mary The Virgin CE VA Primary School and Gillingham School on their existing sites.
- 10.10. There is a long-standing recognition of the need for easily accessible training facilities to support the local economy. The provision of training facilities on existing employment land is supported under Policy 5.

Policy 15. New and improved education and training facilities

The provision of improved and new education and training facilities to meet local needs will be supported.

The preferred location for any new sites for education and training uses is within or adjoining

- > the town centre area,
- > the education and leisure hub on Hardings Lane (see Figure 10.2),

> the local centres, or

> employments sites (particularly if the facilities relate to business skills training).

Expansion of St Mary the Virgin Primary School (from 1 form entry to 2) and a 2 form entry primary school, or suitable alternative provision, will be delivered to meet the needs arising from the Southern Extension.

Community halls, leisure and cultural venues

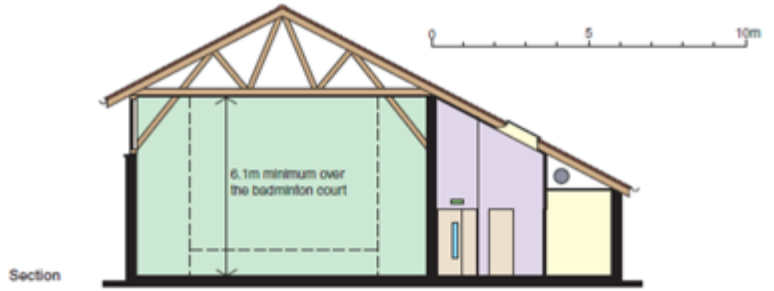
10.11. Gillingham has a wide range of buildings (including pubs and places of worship) that are open to the public (either during normal opening hours or through hire arrangements). These provide bases for various social groups and activities, including provision for the youth.

Table 10.1

| Community venues... | | Cultural venues... | Leisure /recreation venues... |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| - Catholic Church of St Benedict | - Scout Hut | - Gillingham Library | - Fitness By Design |
| - Community Room | - St George's Church | - Gillingham Museum | - Gillingham Bowls Club |
| - Coronation Club | - Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin | - Gillingham School | - Gillingham Town Football Club |
| - Gillingham Community Church | - Church of St Simon and St Jude | - Arts Centre | - North Dorset Rugby Football Club |
| - Gillingham Imperial Silver Band Room | - St Martin's Grange Community Room | - Slade Centre | - North Dorset Tennis Club |
| - Gillingham Methodist Church | - Town Hall | | - Olive Bowl |
| - Royal British Legion Club | - Vicarage School Room | | - RiversMeet Leisure Centre |
| | - Youth and Community Centre | | - Legends Night Club |

10.12. Consultations have confirmed a consensus that, to support and enhance community health and wellbeing, there is a need for a larger multi-purpose hall. The preferred option is an extension of the RiversMeet Leisure Centre, within the education and leisure hub area of search on Hardings Lane (see Figure 10.2), to increase its capacity to serve the indoor sport and leisure needs of a growing population and, additionally, for example, cater for theatrical productions, concerts and community events. The suggested minimum size is 16 x 23m, which reflects the current footings at Hardings Lane and provides for a community hall model layout illustrated in Sport England guidance. The provision of parking for any such facility in the Hardings Lane area should fully meet the projected parking requirements, and if possible take the opportunity to provide additional space, given the existing shortfall of parking in this general location.

Figure 10.2 Education and Leisure Hub area of search on Hardings Lane, and diagram of potential hall layout



10.13. It is also important that the Southern Extension includes suitable provision of local facilities, ideally located within the proposed local centre.



Plan and section of an economically designed hall layout. The double set of corridor doors would allow the changing rooms to be used for stage productions.

Policy 16. New and improved community, leisure and cultural venues

The provision of improved or new community, leisure and cultural venues to meet local needs will be supported. The preferred location for any new community, leisure and cultural venues is within or adjoining:

- > the town centre area;
- > the education and leisure hub on Hardings Lane (see Figure 10.2); or
- > the local centres .

A new multi-purpose community hall (at least 16 x 23m in size) will be provided on land within the education and leisure hub on Hardings Lane.

A new community hall and a new public house with restaurant will be delivered as part of the strategic southern extension, to serve the cultural and social needs of that area.

Household waste recycling facilities

10.14. Household recycling centres help local residents recycle their waste in a sustainable manner. An improved Household Recycling Centre is being planned, to serve the towns of Gillingham and Shaftesbury, and the 2016 Draft Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Waste Plan identifies the preferred site within the proposed extension of the Brickfield Business Park, replacing the current facility at Wincombe Business Park.

Safeguarding existing community facilities

- 10.15. Community facilities need to be protected and allowed to adapt to continue to provide these essential services over the plan period. In particular, this applies to:
- > **Banking facilities** (there are two banks in the High Street, and it is important that there remains some choice of banking facilities in a town of this size).
 - > **Community, cultural and leisure and recreation venues** (as listed in the section above).
 - > **Education and training facilities** (as outlined in the sections above).
 - > **Healthcare facilities** (as outlined in the sections above).
 - > **Post Office and local stores** (there is one Post Office in the High Street, and one at the local store in Broad Robin, and local stores (without Post Office facilities) at Lodbourn and Milton on Stour).
 - > **Public Houses** (there are four pubs and two wine bars in the parish – three in the town conservation area; the Wine Bar and Grill on Queen Street; the Buffalo Pub in Wyke; and The Dolphin Pub in Peacemarsh).
- 10.16. These facilities are considered to make a real contribution to the social fabric of the local area, and their general location is shown in Figure 10.3. The loss of such community facilities will normally be resisted, and in assessing the potential impact on the local community any application for a ‘change of use’ should provide clear evidence on the following factors, so that the impact of such a loss can be more readily assessed:
- a) The general level of use, ideally showing records over the period of at least 5 years when the venue was operational.
 - b) The general catchment population that facility has served.
 - c) The alternative facilities providing that function in the area, and the extent to which these have spare capacity.

Policy 17. Safeguarding existing community facilities

Community facilities are important to local residents and should be retained where possible. The loss or reduction of such facilities will only be supported if, after involving the local community in assessing potential solutions to retain the facility, it is clear that their retention would be unreasonable on the grounds of viability, or the change proposed has the community’s backing. Proposals will be supported that allow such facilities to modernise and adapt for future needs, including diversification schemes linked to the long-term operation of that facility as a viable concern.

Figure 10.3 Key community facilities in Gillingham parish



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11. GREEN AND URBAN SPACES, AND AVOIDING FLOOD RISK

GREEN AND URBAN SPACES: *There will be plenty of well-designed and maintained public spaces, convenient to local residents, with facilities for all age groups. There will be focal areas of public space, which help define the character and form of the town and provide opportunities for local events and festivals. There will also be a network of green spaces that enhance the attractiveness of the town, support local wildlife, provide leisure and recreation opportunities and contribute to good health and wellbeing. Areas at risk of flooding will be avoided, and river corridors managed effectively for flood, biodiversity and recreation benefits.*

11.1. Consultation has shown that Gillingham's residents value the green spaces in and around the town for a number of reasons. They provide places to walk and exercise, places to meet, and places for quiet enjoyment, they support local wildlife and contribute to the character and form of the town. They also provide an alternative walking or cycling network to connect different areas, away from the busy roads. A joined up network of green infrastructure will encourage more people to leave their cars at home and move between neighbourhoods and between the town and its surroundings by cycling or walking. Many of these areas help reduce flooding, as they provide permeable areas where rainfall can percolate into the soils, or are part of the natural floodplain. As a valuable and limited resource, this green network should be used as efficiently as possible for the benefit of as many as possible in as many ways as possible.

The green infrastructure network

11.2. There are various places around the town that have previously been protected because of their wildlife, recreational or landscape contribution. A comprehensive review of Gillingham Landscapes and Open Spaces was undertaken in 2003, much of which remains relevant today.

11.3. Although there are no nationally

What national policy says...

Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including green and other public space) (para 58)

Local communities through Local and Neighbourhood Plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances (para 76)

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; 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), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land. (para 77)

Development should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding (para 101)

What the Local Plan says...

Policy 15 - Development will be required to enhance existing and provide new green infrastructure to improve the quality of life of residents and deliver environmental benefits. Neighbourhood Development Plans should consider measures that assist in delivering key green infrastructure benefits, including the designation of Local Green Space, where appropriate

Policy 3 - Development should seek to minimise the impacts of climate change overall through avoidance of areas at risk of flooding from all sources and the incorporation of measures to reduce flood risk overall

important wildlife sites, there is a local wildlife site (Site of Nature Conservation Interest) at Thorngrove, and a small area of Ancient Woodland at Whistley Copse (on the road to Silton). An area of land at Forest Deer in the north-east part of the parish is registered common land.

- 11.4. The Town Council owns some key green spaces that it manages primarily for recreation.
- 11.5. The river corridors that run through the parish provide an important network of open spaces (although at times these are subject to flooding). As well as having recreational value, they also provide important habitats for local wildlife.

Recreational standards in new development

- 11.6. Having looked at the recommended standards for the provision of green spaces, when this Neighbourhood Plan was written the amount of green space did not fully meet local requirements (these are based on 2015 Fields in Trust (FIT) standards and the Local Planning Authority’s standard for allotments).

Table 11.1

| | Recommended Standard | Provision |
|---|---|--|
| Formal sports provision (playing pitches etc.) | 1.6ha per 1,000 people available to the wider public 1.2km of people’s homes | Current Target: 18.8ha 2031 Target: 27.2ha Current provision 7.2ha, well below recommended levels |
| Equipped play areas | Small play areas for very young children within 100m and Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) for children who can go out to play independently within 400m of most homes. Other provision (e.g. skateboard parks and multi use games areas) within 700 metres of people’s homes. | There is a notable lack of facilities in the area served by Gyllas Way (NE part of Peacemarth area); Rolls Bridge Way (N part of Wyke); and the area around the Station |
| Informal recreation / amenity spaces | 1.4ha per 1,000 people of parks, gardens and amenity green space within 700 metres of people’s homes | Current Target: 16.4ha 2031 Target: 23.8ha Current provision 10.6ha, well below recommended levels |
| Allotments | At least 16 allotments (about 0.4ha) per 1,000 people | Current Target: 4.7ha 2031 Target: 6.8ha Current provision 0.8ha, well below recommended levels |
| Accessible Natural Green Space | 1.8ha per 1,000 people within 700 metres of people’s homes | Current Target: 21.1ha 2031 Target: 30.6ha Current provision 18.4ha, close to recommended levels, but could be made more accessible |

- 11.7. By taking a longer term view of the local needs (to 2031) and how these needs will change further as the local population grows, it should be possible to plan and bring forward accessible green spaces as funds allow. The funding for the provision of sport, recreation

Policy 18. Formal outdoor sports provision

Formal outdoor sports pitches and similar provision should be provided to meet local needs at the recommended standard of 1.6ha per 1,000 people.

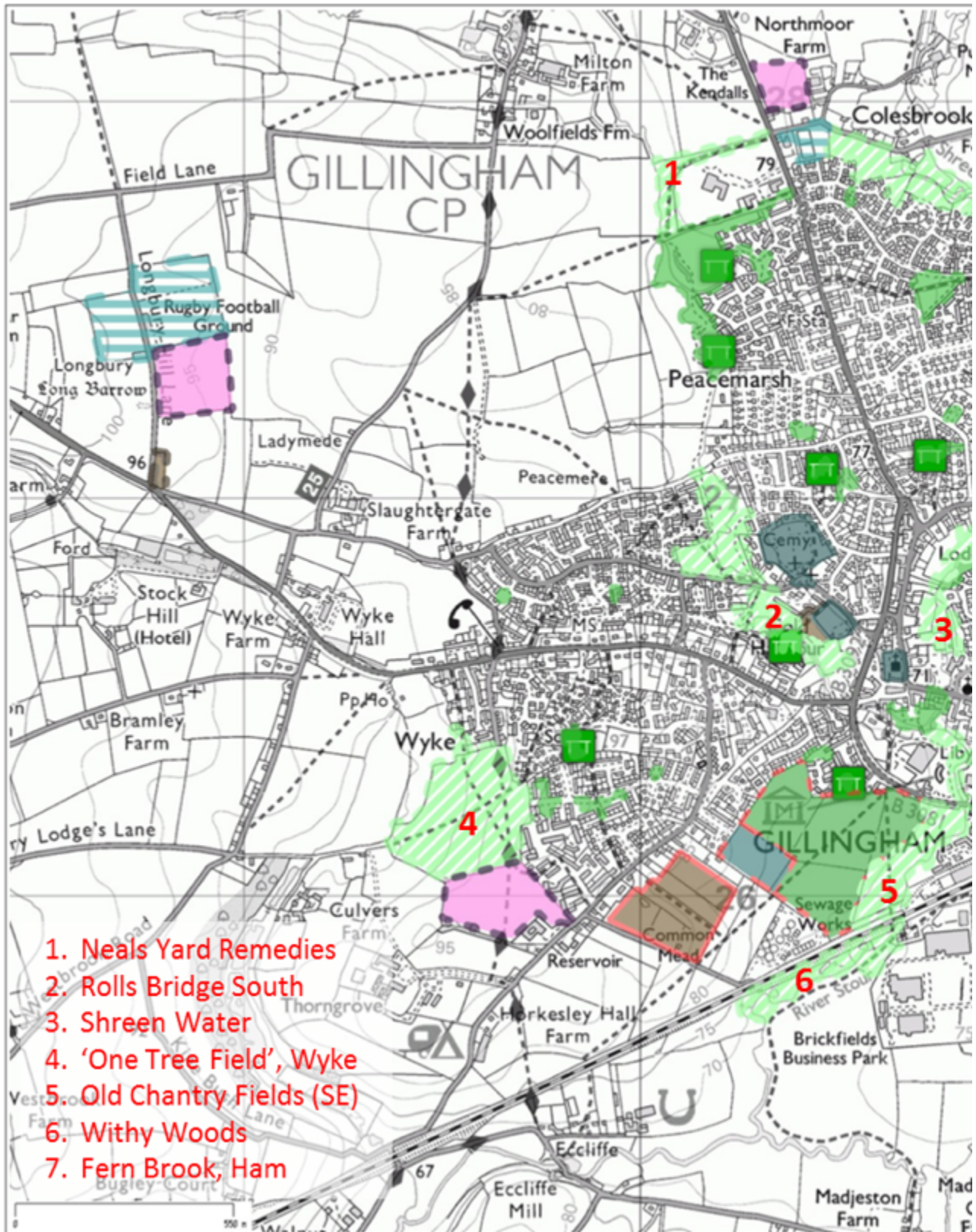
Existing sites that provide formal outdoor sport provision will be protected as an important community resource.

It is expected that at least 7ha of additional land for outdoor sports will come forward through the Southern Extension. Further land for formal sports across the neighbourhood area will be required, and should be located within the areas of search identified in Figure 11.2.

Equipped play areas and informal recreation / amenity spaces

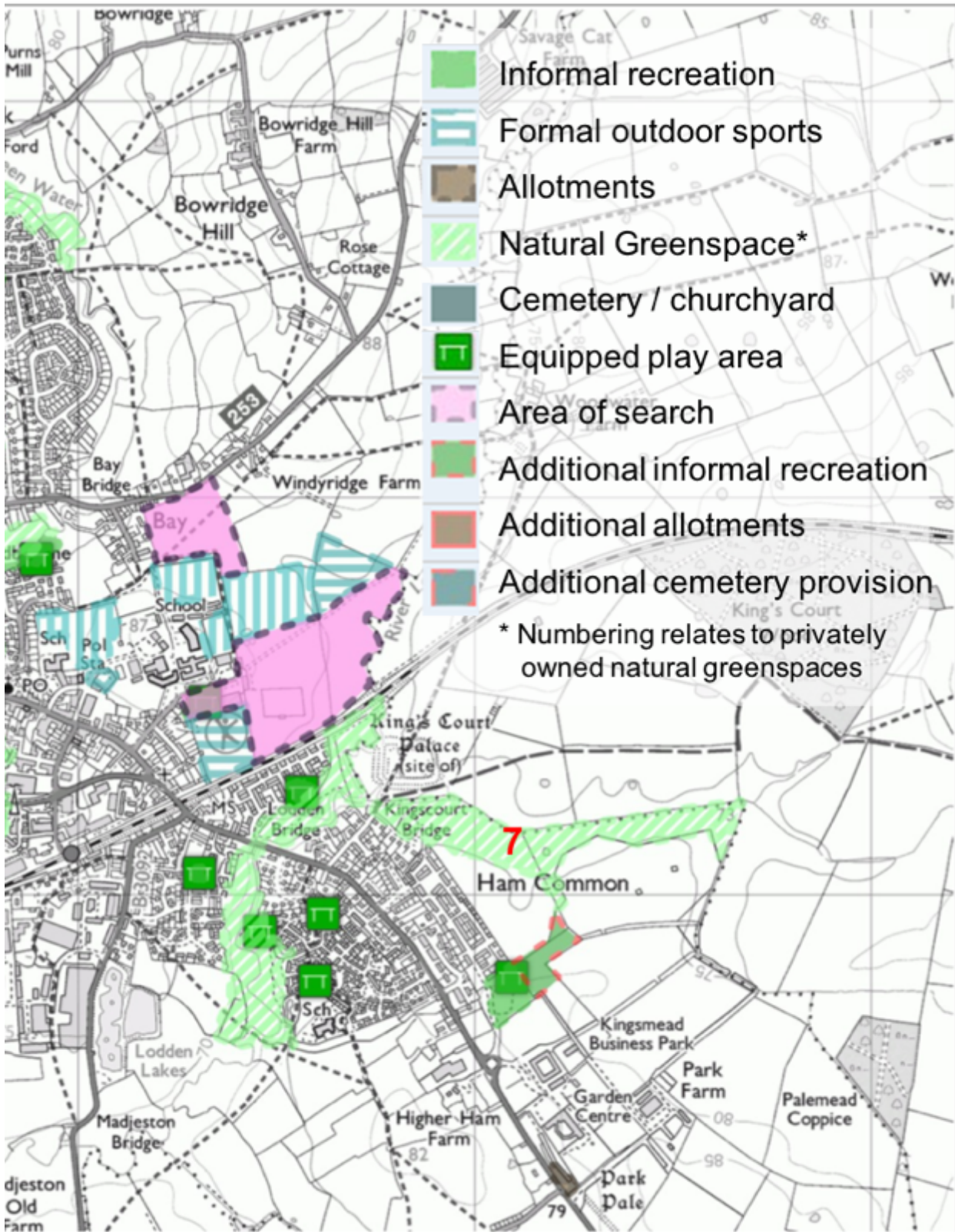
- 11.14. The Neighbourhood Plan area has many different informal recreation / amenity spaces, some of which are also home to equipped play facilities such as swings and climbing frames (aimed at different age ranges). The following table lists the main spaces under these categories. Public open spaces under 300m² have not been included except where used for an equipped play area (for which the minimum recommended size is 100m²).
- 11.15. In terms of the distribution of equipped play areas, where there is a shortfall it should be possible to use some of the public open space areas in those areas to host play equipment where appropriate. A pragmatic approach may need to be taken to achieve the best fit for the distribution of both toddler and older children play spaces, and the Town Council will take a lead role in identifying and delivering new sites within the existing neighbourhoods. The consultation draft masterplan for the Southern Extension includes proposals to extend the Fernbrook Lane area, and will need to include other areas to meet the suggested standards as part of its comprehensive plans. Similarly, the regeneration of the Station Road mixed use area should include provision for equipped play suitable both for young and older children.
- 11.16. In addition, an area of land at Old Chantry Fields (South of Neubourg Way) as shown in Figure 11.4 is identified as the preferred location for the provision of an additional large site for informal recreation and amenity (including natural green space in the river corridor area). This was originally identified in the 2003 Local Plan, and the need for further informal recreation space has not been met elsewhere since. A small portion of the field adjoining the road was not included in this designation, as it was reserved as an option site for the community hall. It would still meet this criteria, but given the preferred location for such a facility is at Hardings Lane, and the increased need for informal recreation space, this plan makes clear that in the event that the site is not required, it should similarly be protected for informal recreation. A recent appeal decision (2014/0916/OUT) confirmed that a very considerable area of the land is not suitable for residential development due to odour from the sewage treatment works.

Figure 11.4 Green spaces



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Figure 11.4 Green spaces



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Table 11.3

| Location | Hectare | Notes | 1 – counted within natural green space quota | 2 – playing fields primarily counted as outdoor sports |
|---------------------------|---------|---|--|--|
| Addison Close | 0.07ha | Equipped play area | | |
| Barnaby Meadows | 0.50ha | Public open space and equipped play area | | |
| Campion Close | 0.04ha | Public open space | | |
| Chaffinch Chase | <0.02ha | Equipped play area | | |
| Chantry Fields | 0.45ha | Public open space | | 1 |
| Church View | 0.12ha | Public open space and designated play area | | |
| Church View | 0.04ha | Public open space | | |
| Coronation Way | 0.12ha | Large area of managed verge | | |
| Fairey Crescent | 0.07ha | Large area of managed verge | | |
| Fernbrook Lane | 0.97ha | Including equipped play area | | |
| Gylla's Green | 0.78ha | Public open space and games area | | |
| Gylla's Way | 0.50ha | Small planted areas | | |
| Ham Farm | 2.52ha | Public open space, equipped play area & BMX track | | |
| Hardings Park | 2.50ha | Equipped play area and playing field | | 2 |
| Hawthorn Avenue | 0.03ha | Equipped play area | | |
| Hawthorn Avenue | 0.35ha | Public open space | | 1 |
| Hyde Road | 0.09ha | Including equipped play area | | |
| Jay Walk / Deer Gardens | 0.03ha | Equipped play area | | |
| Jubilee Fields Peacemarsh | 3.67ha | Public open space and equipped play area | | |
| King Edmund Green | 0.29ha | Public open space and outside gym equipment | | 1 |
| Lodbourne play area | 0.18ha | Public open space and equipped play area | | |
| Lower Lodden Meadow | 1.04ha | Public open space and outside gym equipment | | |
| Maple Way | 0.32ha | Several areas of public open space | | |
| Marlott Road | 0.28ha | Equipped Play Area | | |
| Milestone Way | 0.19ha | Public open space and equipped play area | | |
| Palace Road | 0.03ha | Public open space | | |
| Rolls Bridge | 2.83ha | Public open space | | 1 |
| Saxongate | | Public open space and equipped play area | | |
| Shiresgate | 1.70ha | Public open space | | |
| Shreen Meadow | 1.82ha | Public open space | | |
| Somerset Close | 0.15ha | | | |
| Sorrell Way | 0.06ha | | | |
| Town Meadow | 0.40ha | Public open space | | |
| Upper Lodden Meadow | 2.49ha | Public open space and equipped play area | | 1 |

Policy 19. Equipped play areas and informal recreation / amenity spaces

Informal play and recreation areas should be provided to meet local needs at the recommended standard of 1.4ha per 1,000 people of parks, gardens and amenity green space, and equipped play areas within 100m (for very young children) within 400m (for children who can go out to play independently) of most homes.

To help achieve these standards, an area of public open space equivalent to at least 30m² per dwelling should be provided on all housing sites of over 0.4ha, unless based on the

Continued...

Policy 19 continued...

local standards there is no need for additional open space in that specific area or alternative provision is agreed. Where practical, this should include an appropriate mix of equipped children's play space and informal recreational amenity space.

Existing sites for equipped play areas and informal recreation / amenity spaces will be protected as an important community resource.

It is expected that at least 5.8ha of land for additional informal recreation and equipped play areas will be made available through the Southern Extension, which will include an extension to the Fernbrook Lane Open Space as well as other sites well located to the local population. Provision should also be made with the mixed use development in the Station Road area. Further provision will be met through the delivery of the informal recreation proposal for Old Chantry Fields (South of Le Neubourg Way), which is to be protected for this use (although the area adjoining Le Neubourg Way may if required be developed for a community hall in line with Policy 16). Elsewhere existing areas of public open space may be improved in order to meet the required standards for equipped play.

Allotments

- 11.17. There are currently three allotment sites in Gillingham, one local authority site off Cemetery Road, one private site at Park Farm and one private site at Slaughtergate. The current sites are not of sufficient size to cater for the growing population, and one or more new sites need to be found and brought forward. The level of provision should be around 16 allotments per 1,000 people (based on the North Dorset Local Plan guidance of one standard allotment plot for every 60 people), which equates to one full sized or two half sized plots for every 26 homes (given average occupancy is about 2.3 people per dwelling). Some provision (at least the equivalent of 75 half-sized allotment plots) should come forward in the master planning of the Southern Extension, which will include over 1ha of land for this purpose. However at this level, this would not provide the full amount normally required. In addition, an area of land off Common Mead has been identified that should be able to provide suitable land for allotments (as shown in Figure 11.4), with the southernmost extent potentially restricted by the future expansion of the existing Sewage Treatment Works as included in the Waste Plan. If necessary the further provision of allotments may be supplemented by provision to the north and west of the town (in the areas of search shown in Figure 11.2). Parking and recycling should be included within these sites.

Policy 20. Allotments

Provision should be made for the delivery of allotments to serve local needs, based on a standard of one allotment plot (250m²) or two half sized plots for every 26 dwellings.

Existing allotments will be protected as an important community resource.

It is expected that at least 1ha of additional serviced allotment land will be made available through the Southern Extension. Further land for allotments should be located within land at Common Mead, as shown in Figure 11.4, or in the areas of search identified in Figure 11.2.

Accessible Natural Green Space

- 11.18. Although Gillingham is growing, it is surrounded by countryside, and the river corridors that flow through Gillingham bring the countryside into the very heart of the town.
- 11.19. Some areas are managed for public access by the Dorset Countryside Rangers, including Shreen Meadows and Shires Gate (off Horsefields / Swallowfields), Rolls Bridge, the area of Chantry Fields north of Le Neubourg Way, and Lodden Fields.
- 11.20. Land at Withy Wood (owned by Network Rail) is currently maintained by Gillingham Action For Nature Group. However many other parts of the river corridor could be made more accessible, as could be the adjoining countryside. Gillingham Town Council will work with land owners, the Environment Agency, the Highway Authority, Dorset Wildlife Trust and other appropriate partners to increase public access to these important areas, as funds permit. The main areas where additional public access may be sought in conjunction with the private landowners (as numbered on Figure 11.4) are:
- 1) Neals Yard Remedies
 - 2) Rolls Bridge South
 - 3) Shreen Water
 - 4) 'One Tree Field', Wyke
 - 5) Old Chantry Fields (South of Le Neubourg Way, adjoining the river)
 - 6) Withy Woods
 - 7) Fern Brook, Ham
- 11.21. The following policy seeks to enhance the value of these river corridors in general, throughout the plan area, and identifies specific areas as part of the natural green space resource for local residents. Given that there is no river corridor in the western part of the town, the 'One Tree Field' which is well used by local residents (being crossed by a number of public rights of way) has also been identified as an important natural green space. In considering how improved public access can be achieved, it is recognised that this will need to be balanced with their wider role (such as floodplain or farmland).

Policy 21. Accessible Natural Green Space and River Corridors

Development will be supported that enhances public access to the river corridor environment, enhances the biodiversity and landscape value of the river corridors and includes measures to improve flood management.

Areas of natural green space as identified in Figure 11.4 will be safeguarded as an important green infrastructure resource for local residents. Where possible, development should ensure that they are managed appropriately for greater public access.

- 11.22. The area of countryside that forms part of the former Gillingham Royal Forest is also of historic interest and potential for development to support recreation and woodland planting is highlighted under Policy 6.

Cemetery provision

- 11.23. Gillingham cemetery and chapel, and the Garden of Remembrance, are owned and managed by Gillingham Town Council. They date back to the 19th century, and provide a place for local burials and quiet reflection. It is anticipated that further cemetery space will

be needed within the lifetime of this Neighbourhood Plan, and the previously identified site off Stour Meadows is still proposed for possible use as this additional town cemetery.

Policy 22. New cemetery provision at Stour Meadows
 Land off Stour Meadows as shown in Figure 11.4 is safeguarded for use as a cemetery.

Areas of important local green space

11.24. All the various spaces described above and shown in the various maps – the areas for formal sports (playing pitches etc.), equipped play areas, informal recreation and amenity space, allotments, cemeteries and accessible natural green space – are essential green infrastructure for the area.

Figure 11.5 Local Green Spaces, Important Open Gaps and Bowridge Hill visually sensitive area

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11.25. However some green spaces have characteristics that cannot be readily relocated or replicated, and it is possible to give some such sites additional protection through a Local Green Space designation. This is a much stronger protection that should last beyond the plan period, and for that reason can only be justified where the sites are relatively local and discrete in size, and are demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular local significance (such as their outstanding beauty, historic significance, wildlife interest or recreational / amenity value). The following sites (as shown on Figure 11.5 and listed in Table 11.6) are considered to have such local value to be protected. Future consideration will be given to the potential designation of Old Chantry Fields (South of Le Neubourg Way), once its future use for information public recreation is secured under Policy 19.






-  Local Green Space
-  Important Open Gap
-  Visually sensitive area

Table 11.6 – Designated Local Green Spaces

| Site | Size | Reason for designation |
|-----------------------|--------|---|
| Town Meadow | 0.40ha | Town Park |
| Garden of Remembrance | 0.49ha | Cemetery and place of quiet reflection |
| St Mary's Churchyard | 0.29ha | Churchyard and setting of a key Listed Building |

11.26. Important open gaps have also been identified as part of this review, based on the Gillingham Open Spaces and Landscape Assessment Report of November 2003, and although they do not fit the criteria for designation as a Local Green Space, their function in

this context is also critical. These have been identified between the following distinct areas, and shown on Figure 11.5 and listed in Table 11.7:

- > Wyke in Gillingham and the built up area around Wyke Hall
- > Peacemarsh in Gillingham and Milton-on-Stour
- > Peacemarsh in Gillingham and Colesbrook

In addition, the development south west of Bay that is proposed in the Local Plan should include a suitable landscaping scheme to retain distinct character of Bay as a separate (historic) settlement.

Table 11.7 – Important Open Gaps

| Gap | Reason for Importance |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Wyke and Wyke Hall | Retain distinct character of Wyke Hall (an important Listed building) and farms from the main part of the town. Land to the north of Wyke Road includes remnants of the historic parkland associated with the Hall (and is locally listed by the Dorset Garden Trust), and land to the south also functions as part of this gap. |
| Peacemarsh and Milton-on-Stour | Retain distinct character of Milton-on-Stour as a separate village to the north of the town. |
| Peacemarsh and Colesbrook | Retain distinct character of Colesbrook as a separate hamlet to the north-east of the town. |

View to Bowridge Hill

11.27. Bowridge Hill rises above the town to the east, as a firm and definitive presence. It provides a vantage point to observe Colesbrook, Purns Mill, and the tidy pastures towards the gleaming spire of Milton church, and its importance was highlighted in an earlier open spaces study for the town. The slopes of Bowridge Hill make an important contribution to the setting of Gillingham within which substantial new development would be highly detrimental.



Policy 23. Protecting Important Green Spaces

Existing areas of green space (as shown in Figure 11.4) that have been identified as important for formal sports (playing pitches etc.), play, informal amenity space, allotments, cemeteries and accessible natural green space are essential green infrastructure for the area and should be protected. Development on, or change of use of these open spaces that would reduce their recreational or amenity value (including consideration of their wider environmental and ecological benefits) will not be permitted unless alternative and/or suitable replacement provision of equal or better recreational quality or value is provided in a location which is better placed and accessible to the surrounding community it serves, in line with the adopted standards referred to in the North Dorset Local Plan.

Continued...

Policy 23 continued...

The areas of search (as shown in Figure 11.4) identified for new provision of formal sports and informal recreation / amenity space and ancillary development should be safeguarded from alternative development that would prejudice their delivery, unless there is a clear over-riding public benefit to the proposed development that cannot reasonably be located outside of that area.

Local Green Spaces, as mapped in Figure 11.5, are to be protected from development that would detract from their reason for designation.

Development that would reduce the openness of the important gaps mapped in Figure 11.5 will not be permitted. Development in the area south west of Bay should include a suitable landscaping scheme to retain the distinct character of Bay as a separate (historic) settlement.

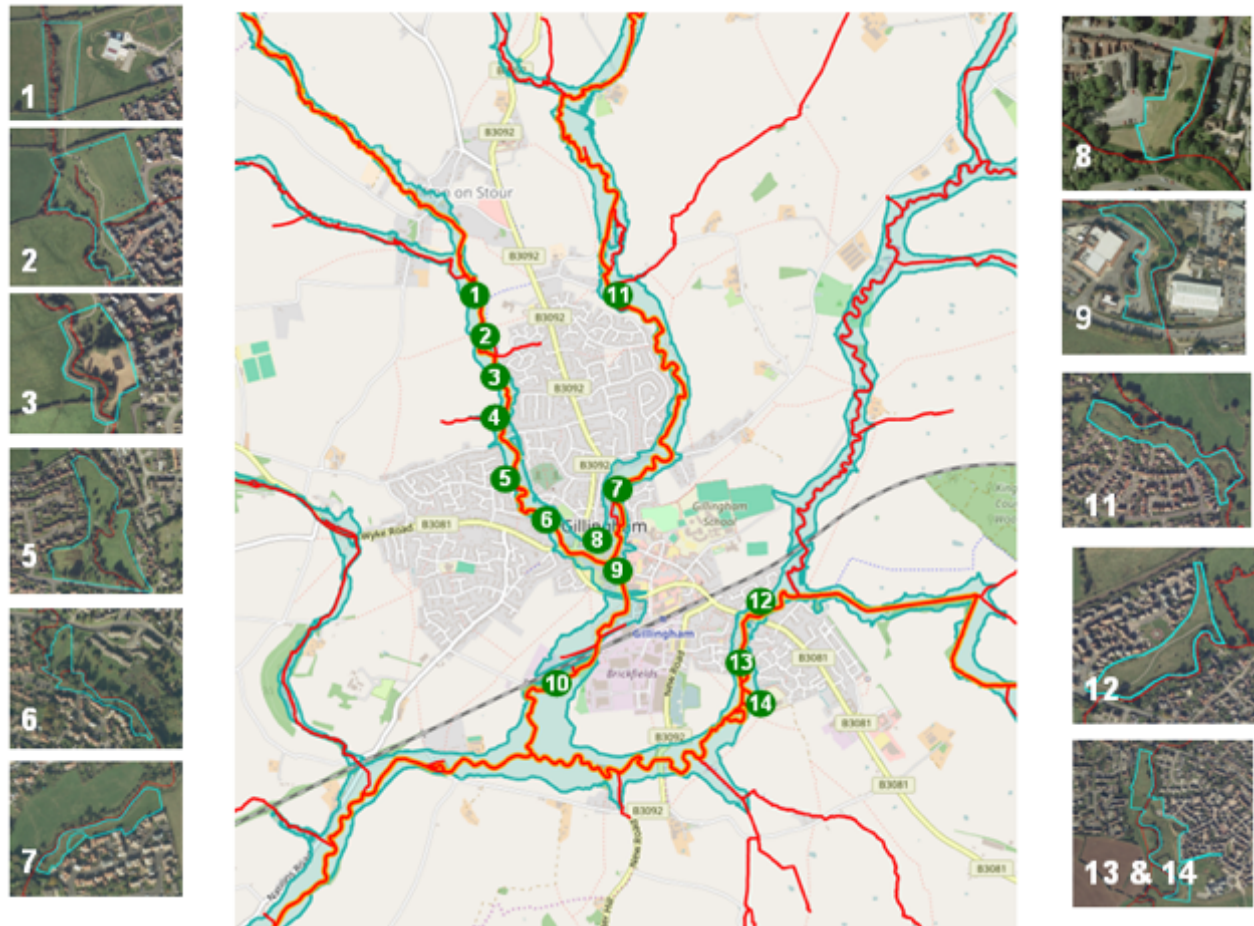
Development in the visually sensitive area on the higher land at Bowridge Hill (as indicated in Figure 11.5) must be carefully considered. Development within this area will not be supported if it would be clearly visible and incongruous above the existing pattern of development, or if it would otherwise detract from the green landscape backdrop that this hill affords the town.

Avoiding and Reducing Flood Risk

- 11.28. Gillingham is located on the confluence of three steep, fast responding watercourses draining large agricultural catchments.
- 11.29. The topography is relatively gentle, reflecting the underlying clays. The underlying geology is Kimmeridge Clay although at Wyke there is evidence of stonier ground. The three rivers drain an extended catchment area, and the relatively impervious nature of the underlying clay means that in times of high rainfall or storm they are prone to dramatic and rapid change in water level.
- 11.30. There is a history of flood risk, generally due to the high rainfall that can lead to extensive flooding of the river valleys, and prolonged wet periods that can lead to groundwater flooding. Flooding has been experienced many times in the past which has affected properties and disrupted road transport, with major flood events recorded in 1979, 1982, 2000, 2012 and 2014 due to high levels in the River Stour, River Lodden and Shreen Water. Soil erosion and build-up of sediment are a major problem in the upper catchment, with farming and land use practices thought to have a significant impact on surface water run-off rates.
- 11.31. Over the last twenty five years, schemes have been implemented to reduce flood risk to Gillingham. In addition to these engineering schemes, other flood risk management activities are carried out. These include activities which help to reduce the probability of flooding and those that address the consequences of flooding.
- 11.32. Avoiding areas at risk of flooding, and measures to reduce flood risk, are well covered by national and local plan policies (most specifically Policies 3 and 13 of the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1). The following maps are provided to help identify areas in Gillingham where open spaces provide a vital role in flood management, and where the Town Council has recorded flood events in the past.

Figure 11.8 – Public Open Spaces Functioning as Flood Plains

PUBLIC OPEN SPACES FUNCTIONING AS FLOOD PLAINS



- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Ellie’s Wood | 6. King Edmund’s Green & Hawthorne Avenue | 10. Withy Woods & Millennium Woods |
| 2. Jubilee Fields | 7. Barnaby Meadows | 11. Shreen Meadow |
| 3. Jubilee Fields | 8. Town Meadow | 12. Upper Loden Meadow |
| 4. Jubilee Fields Cycleway | 9. Chantry Fields POS | 13. Lower Loden Meadow |
| 5. Rolls Bridge | | 14. Ham Farm |

Figure 11.9 – Fluvial Flood Risk from Main Rivers

FLUVIAL FLOOD RISK FROM MAIN RIVERS



- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Milton-on-Stour | 5. Land off of Nations Road | 9. Upper Loden Meadows |
| 2. Wavering Lane | 6. Bay Road | 10. Old Chantry Fields |
| 3. Rolls Bridge | 7. Chantry Fields | |
| 4. Eccliffe | 8. Chantry Fields | |

11.33. Measures to reduce flood risk will depend on the nature of the site and type of development proposed.

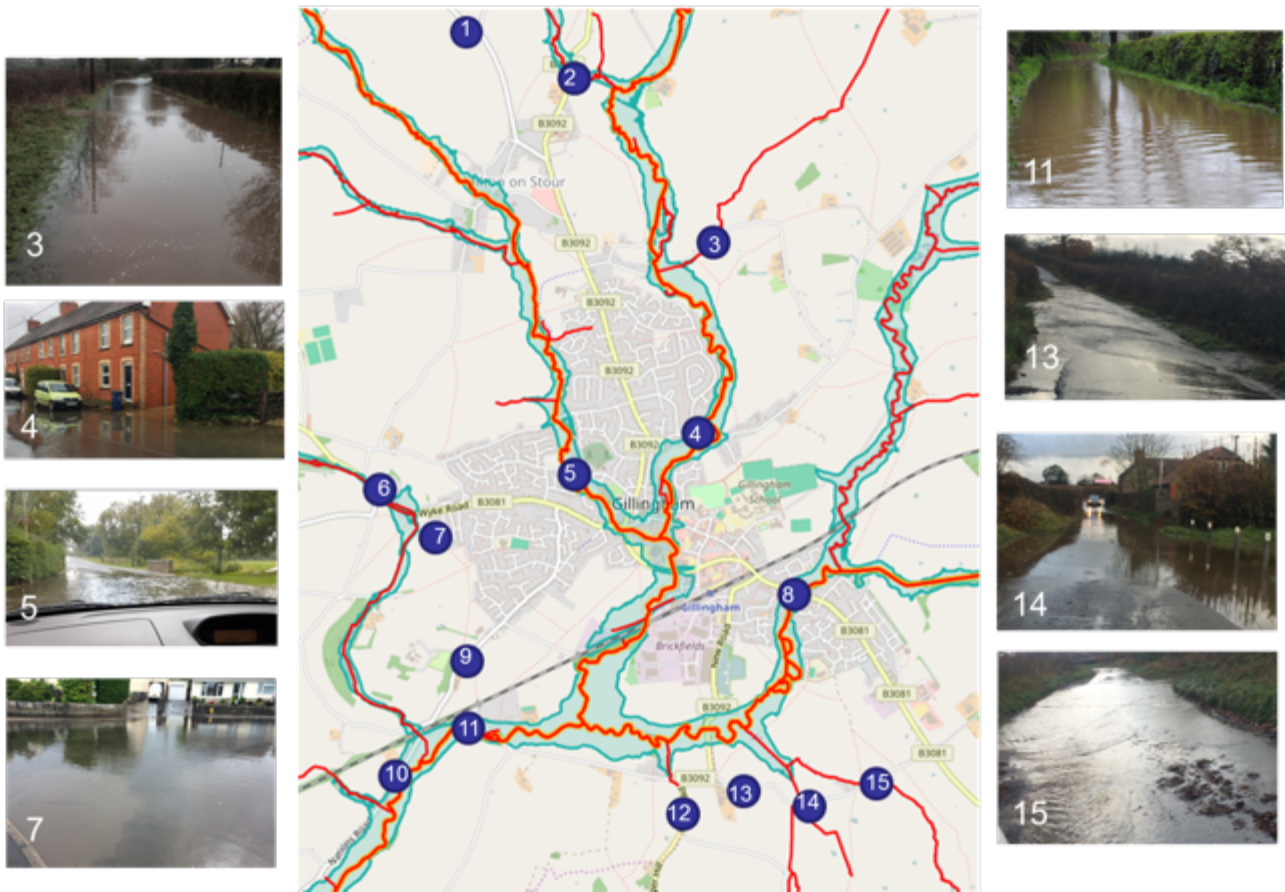
11.34. SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) have been incorporated into early 21st century housing developments at Wyke, Peacemarsh, Barnaby Mead and Ham in Gillingham. These vary in their size and design and some are considered to be more effective and aesthetically pleasing than others. The SUDS at Horsefields and Cherryfields, and that at Ham, do not integrate with the character of the local area and this type of scheme should not be repeated. Whereas the SUDS off Marlott Road works well, is easy to maintain and looks attractive. In all cases it is important that a management plan is put in place for the future maintenance of the system.

11.35. The natural environment and trees in particular can play a huge part in helping to absorb surface water run-off which in turn reduces peak flooding flow. Gillingham’s sub-catchments are dominated by agriculturally improved land which has higher flood peaks than land with more natural landscapes. On this basis, one measure that is encouraged to reduce flood risk is the creation of tree shelter belts in the right places in order to reduce peak flow.

11.36. The existing ditch and watercourse network can also be improved and maintained to maximise efficiency.

Figure 11.10 – Surface Water Flood Risk in Gillingham

SURFACE WATER FLOOD RISK IN GILLINGHAM



- | | | |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Martins Lane, Milton-on-Stour | 5. Rolls Bridge | 11. Eccliffe |
| 2. Spickets Bridge, Milton-on-Stour | 6. B3081 Wyke Hall | 12. B3092 Madjeston |
| 3. Colesbrook, Bowridge Hill | 7. Clarendon Close | 13. Cole Street Lane |
| 4. Bay Road | 8. Lodden Bridge | 14. Cole Street Lane |
| | 9. Common Mead Lane | 15. Cole Street Lane |
| | 10. Nations Road | |

12. DESIGN, CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

DESIGN, Climate Change and Renewable Energy: *Designs will have enhanced the richness and appearance of the built environment, and created a safe and vibrant community with a strong sense of community identity. Buildings will be sustainable, adaptable and environmentally friendly. Gillingham will be taking strides to address climate change adaptation and mitigation and making steady progress towards a reducing carbon footprint through energy efficiency, demand reduction, reducing the need to travel and transitioning towards renewable energy use and local energy generation.*

12.1. In June 2012 the Local Planning Authority endorsed the Gillingham Town Design Statement to provide specific design guidance and direct future development in a sympathetic and constructive manner to complement and extend the key features of the present Town. It provides a detailed analysis of the features and qualities of the area that make it distinctive and are cherished by local people.

12.2. This does not mean that buildings should not take a modern and sustainable approach. Energy and water efficiency, including the provision of renewable technology, and high speed communications (such as superfast broadband) are an increasingly essential component in modern buildings, and need to be designed in at the outset.

12.3. The key features of Gillingham noted in the design statement are, in short:

- > Despite individual plot variation, developments have followed an overall theme, which provides integrated communities.
- > Buildings along the through roads provide historic references to earlier periods in the history of the Town.
- > Developments are relatively low density, with grassed open spaces or other soft-landscaped areas, contributing to the rural feel of the Town.

What national policy says...

Plan positively to achieve high quality and inclusive design for all development (para 57)

Avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally (para 59)

Do not impose architectural styles or stifle innovation, but seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness (para 60)

Great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area (para 63)

Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions (para 64)

Take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption (para 96)

What the Local Plan says...

Policy 3 – New buildings should be designed to make best use of solar radiation and passive cooling through the incorporation of passive solar design principles, and incorporate measures to meet the current national targets for energy performance. Development should incorporate measures to reduce water consumption, and measures to reduce the impact of excessive heat

Policy 7 – design and layout of housing development should be of a density that respects local character and amenity.

Policy 24 – Development should be designed to improve the character and quality of the area within which it is located.

- > Development is generally low rise development, comprised of single or two storey buildings, with some three or four storey buildings in key locations.
- > There is easy access to the surrounding open countryside and rivers, through good footpath links and open aspects providing views out of the built-up areas.

Character Areas

12.4. The Gillingham Town Design Statement identified distinctive character areas, shown in Figure 12.1 (and work as part of the Neighbourhood Plan has extended this to include Milton-on-Stour and Colesbrook). The essential characteristics of these areas that should inform new development is summarised in the following pages. However for a more detailed analysis it is important to refer to the original Town Design Statement document, supplemented by the Historic Town Study.

Figure 12.1 – Character Areas

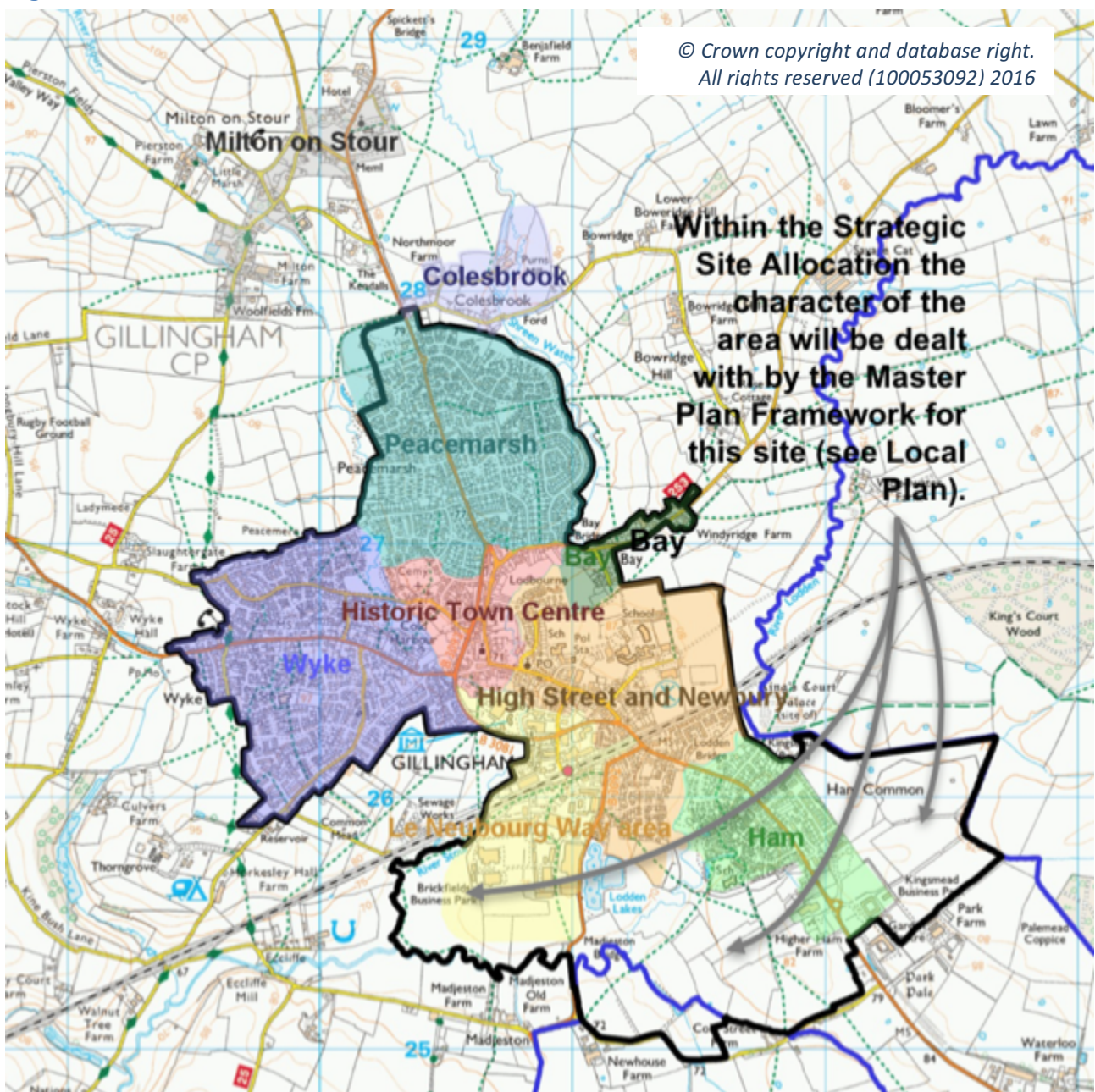


Table 12.2 – Historic Town Centre Character Area

| HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE | |
|---|---|
| OVERARCHING PATTERN AND SHAPE | The core area is medium density ribbon development set along the historic roads. Although narrow in places, the roads are straight, with gaps in frontages that provide open aspects. |
| PLOTS AND BUILDINGS | A mosaic of character types, with irregular plots and character dating from the 17 th Century up until the present day. Predominantly two storey, a few are three. Edwardian and Victorian terraced housing, cottages and small terrace housing, town houses and suburban villas and inter-war housing. |
| MATERIALS | Traditionally coursed rubble with ashlar and/or brick dressings under hipped tile or thatched roofs, with later 18th to early 20th Century generally Gillingham brick with slate or clay tile roofs. |
| HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPE | The green aspects created through mature trees are an important feature of this area. River flood plains have also restricted subsequent infill development to the thin ribbon along the main road frontages, providing glimpses of green fields. |
| EXAMPLES OF BUILDINGS OF LOCAL CHARACTER | Public Buildings: The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Cemetery Road Youth and Community Centre, Cemetery Chapel. Medieval Domestic Buildings: Stour Motors. Post-medieval Houses: The Vicarage, Lime Tree House, Plank House, Chantry Cottage, the Cottage, Tower House, St Martin’s, Churchbury House, Portland Cottages. Post-medieval Industrial and Commercial Buildings: Mill House, Phoenix Hotel, Queen’s Head, The Slade Centre. |



Tower House



Town Bridge



Table 12.3 – High Street and Newbury Character Area

| HIGH STREET AND NEWBURY (Modern Town Centre) | |
|---|---|
| OVERARCHING PATTERN AND SHAPE | Dominated in character by the school, leisure facilities and modern housing. The main focus is the High Street and Newbury, which prior to the relief road was the main route through the Town. Culs-de-sac extend outward from the straight main through road that is generally straight or slightly curved. |
| PLOTS AND BUILDINGS | The medieval suburb of older ribbon development along these roads is interspersed with Victorian terraced housing, suburban villas and other terraces of mixed composition. Behind the older line of development, the modern housing has occurred in blocks. |
| MATERIALS | Early building materials comprise coursed square rubble Greensand or Corillian Limestone walls with slate roofs. Moulded and polychrome brick detail is common. |
| HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPE | The grassed public open spaces, remnant fields, School and leisure facilities provide important green areas within the heart of the Town. Shrubs within gardens also provide an element of soft landscaping. |
| EXAMPLES OF BUILDINGS OF LOCAL CHARACTER | Public Buildings: Methodist Church, Baptist Chapel and Hall, Old School House, School Lane. Commercial Premises: Lloyds Bank, NatWest Bank, Phoenix House. Early 19th century houses: The Laurels, Blackmore Vale House, Lodden Bridge Farm House, Newbury House. |



Allum and Siddaway



Melbury House and Phoenix House

Table 12.4 – Le Neubourg Way, Station Road and Brickfields Character Area

| LE NEUBOURG WAY, STATION ROAD AND BRICKFIELDS (SW of the Town Centre) | |
|--|---|
| OVERARCHING PATTERN AND SHAPE | Larger defined by the late 19th Century and later industrial and commercial development, linked to the railway and town centre. The relief road, river and railway all form distinctive edges and barriers. |
| PLOTS AND BUILDINGS | The bulk of the area south of the railway comprises an extensive area of industrial units and business park accessed by a number of curvilinear cul-de-sacs. To the north of the railway, there are large plots containing small industrial estates, light industry and warehouses accessed from Station Road, together with a modern housing estate. There are superstore developments within large car parks and the Town Library and Museum. |
| MATERIALS | The older buildings are built exclusively of Gillingham red brick with clay roofs. In contrast, the modern industrial buildings use non-local materials such as profiled sheets, concrete and glass. |
| HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPE | Roads tend to be wide with footways each side, with large parking and turning areas are needed for HGV's and cars. Apart from the river corridor, there are few trees and open green spaces in the area, and it is clear the area would benefit from a greater degree of soft landscaping and the retention of views to the river corridor and surrounding countryside. |
| EXAMPLES OF BUILDINGS OF LOCAL CHARACTER | Gillingham Station, The Junction Box, London House, Rose's Coal Office, Dorset Store, The Old Stables, Somdor House, Gordon Villas. |



Gillingham Station



Table 12.5 – Ham Character Area

| HAM (South-East Gillingham) | |
|---|---|
| OVERARCHING PATTERN AND SHAPE | Development here lies along and is dominated by the main road to Shaftesbury, with mainly modern suburban development to either side. At present it is bounded by open countryside, but this will change with the development of the Southern Extension. |
| PLOTS AND BUILDINGS | The older sections along the main road comprise an interesting mixture of cottages, historic rural settlement, inter-war suburban housing and modern infill. The more modern infill is also a mix of house sizes and types. At the southern end there are larger plots used for a variety of businesses, in what will form part of the Southern Extension. |
| MATERIALS | Earlier buildings tend to be built of stone rubble, with brick or rendered chimneys and slate or plain tile roofs, or Gillingham brick. Some brick has been painted, and the more modern estates are brick skinned with a mixture of slate and tile roofs. Modern industrial and commercial buildings are built from a variety of brick and nonlocal materials. |
| HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPE | There are a number of garden hedges and mature ornamental garden trees along parts of Shaftesbury Road. |
| EXAMPLES OF BUILDINGS OF LOCAL CHARACTER | Park Farmhouse, Gillingham Park Boundary Bank (Deer Park). The Haywain, Kings Cottage, Pottery Villas, Rose Cottage, Shaftesbury View. |



Park Farmhouse

Table 12.6 – Bay Character Area

BAY(East of Gillingham)

| | |
|---|---|
| OVERARCHING PATTERN AND SHAPE | Separated from the main part of the Town by a green gap created by the Shreen Water, the settlement of Bay forms a distinct rural settlement with its character rooted in the past. The limits of this L-shaped settlement formed by Bay Road and Bay Lane correspond closely with the original extent of the roadside common along Bay Road. |
| PLOTS AND BUILDINGS | There are large relatively shallow irregular plots and a farm along Bay Road. It is the only character area within Gillingham not to contain modern housing estates, although there are modern detached houses on the edge of the settlement. Buildings are predominantly detached houses, farmhouses and houses set centrally within large plots, some of which have become subdivided but still contain the original houses. There are also good examples of Dorset long houses with steeply pitched gable ended roofs. |
| MATERIALS | The 18th and early 19th Century buildings tend to be built in coursed and/or squared Greensand or Corallian limestone rubble. Earlier 19th Century suburban villas are built of coursed rubble with brick dressings and slate roof. Later 19th Century semi-detached houses are built entirely from brick. In general the area displays a mixture of slate and clay tiled roofs. |
| HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPE | The nature of this small essential rural settlement means that glimpses of countryside are evident throughout. The eastern part of the character area comprises Remnant Fields and Paddocks on both side of the Shreen Water around Bay Bridge. |
| EXAMPLES OF BUILDINGS OF LOCAL CHARACTER | Hedgewell, Tresillian, Prospect, 1 and 2 Bay Villas, End Cottage and Clematis Cottage. |



Tresillian, Bay

Table 12.7 – Peacemash Character Area

PEACEMARSH (Northern Gillingham)

OVERARCHING PATTERN AND SHAPE Centred on the historic rural settlement of Peacemash, along the main road running north of the Town towards Milton-on-Stour. Either side of the main road are a range of different housing estate developments distinguished by their road alignments, plot sizes and linear boundaries between the estates.

PLOTS AND BUILDINGS Peacemash Road is characterised by fairly shallow irregular rectilinear plots, with most houses set back from the street on differing orientations and building lines. Beyond these lie low to medium density housing typical rhythmic suburban estate with simple, regular layouts and good interconnecting footpaths. Along the edge of the river Stour are a series of larger houses set within large plots.

MATERIALS The 18th and early 19th Century vernacular houses are built with coursed, sometimes dressed Corallian Limestone rubble with either clay tile, slate or the occasional thatched roofs. Gillingham red brick is increasingly used from the mid-19th Century onwards. Later 20th Century housing estates feature a mixture of brick or coloured rendered walls with concrete tiles or slate roofs. The business development, Neal’s Yard Remedies, includes the use of blue profiled sheets and timber.

HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPE East and west the adjoining countryside rises above the main area of development. The large front gardens and number of greens within the housing estates softens the character of the area.

EXAMPLES OF BUILDINGS OF LOCAL CHARACTER Lodbourne Farmhouse Ferndale, Littledown Cottage, Woodsorrel, Magnolia Cottage, Fairholm, Greystone Cottages, Jessamine Cottage, Stower Cottages, Peacemash Terrace, The Dolphin Inn, Selma Cottage,



The Dolphin Inn

Table 12.8 – Wyke Character Area

WYKE (Western Gillingham)

| | |
|---|--|
| OVERARCHING PATTERN AND SHAPE | Wyke Road (the modern B3081 to Wincanton) is the main axial route through the area, with Wavering Lane to the north having a rural character, and Common Mead Lane to the south also radiating out (although the route has been diverted along Broad Robin). Large modern estates arranged around curvilinear cul-de sacs have developed in-between, and the area as a whole is separated from the main body of the town by the River Stour. Another distinct gap exists between these suburbs and Wyke Hall further west. |
| PLOTS AND BUILDINGS | Ribbon development along these historic routes is a mix of styles, from cottages to grander ornamental villas and town houses either on or set back slightly from the street frontage, with some modern infill in between. Modern housing estates include a variety of smaller detached, semi-detached and short terraced houses in smaller plots. |
| MATERIALS | Older properties have used coursed rubble, ashlar and rubble, or have been rendered, with tiled or slate roofs. Later housing is predominantly of local Gillingham brick, although the inter-war houses are mainly rendered. |
| HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPE | The main routes through the area are quite leafy with mature trees in some of the larger gardens, buildings set back from the back of footways, green verges with shrubs and other soft landscaping to promote an open, natural feeling, and links through to the countryside in the case of Wavering and Common Mead Lane. |
| EXAMPLES OF BUILDINGS OF LOCAL CHARACTER | Wyke Brewery; Brewery House (now Milford House); Old Toll House; Wyke Bridge (carrying Wyke Street over the River Stour); Folly's End; Little Chantry; Knapp House. Rosebank, Ramleh, Trelawn and Trevena, Mount View House, Wyke Hill House, Grosvenor and Broadleigh, Wayside and Dene Hollow, Cedar Tree House, Hillcrest, Rolls Mead, Wyke House, Wyke Barn, Wyke Brewery Workers Cottages, Wyke (Benoni, Tredegar, Spencer House, Rowan House, Preston Cottage, Waverland, Clarendon, Wootton), The Old Post Office, Pound House, Long Path, The Stone House, The Old Coach House, South Lodge, The Old School House, Rose Villa, The Buffalo Inn, Jubilee House, Coombe Rise, Brewery Workers Cottages, Wyke (Penyvan, Stockholm, Bayford Cottage, Jada, Brambles), Ansty Rose, Belmont, Melrose, Lyndale, Hill View, Wyke Cottage and Applegrove House, Oak Trees, Chantry Farm, Thistledown Cottage in Wavering Lane, |



Brewery Workers' Cottages

Table 12.9 – Milton-on-Stour Character Area

MILTON-ON-STOUR

| | |
|---|--|
| OVERARCHING PATTERN AND SHAPE | Milton-on-Stour is a dispersed rural settlement characterised by a collection of farmsteads interspersed with numerous secular buildings which are located adjacent to but not all fronting or positioned on the highway. |
| PLOTS AND BUILDINGS | A scattering of rural vernacular and polite buildings together with the formality of the Church of St. Simon and St. Jude. Plot sizes reflect the rural nature of the area with farmsteads and private residential gardens interspersed with agricultural fields. Despite evidence of earlier occupation current buildings reflect the vernacular and architectural traditions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Buildings are of single, two and three storeys. |
| MATERIALS | A simplified geological map of Dorset shows the area lying on the junction of Corallian limestone and clay. Earlier buildings reflect the use of natural stone traditionally coursed or random rubble, with some later buildings, those of the 19th century in particular, also using red brick as a detail or for whole elevations. Roofing materials tend to be clay plain tiles or pantiles with later 19th century use of natural grey slate. Some 20th century buildings or modifications to earlier buildings break with tradition and have seen the introduction of different materials such as render or synthetic stone and concrete tiles. |
| HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPE | The village is characterised by narrow lanes enclosed by buildings, hedges, boundary walls and fences. A strong landscape framework is also provided by native and non-native trees with glimpses to open farm land and private gardens. |
| EXAMPLES OF BUILDINGS OF LOCAL CHARACTER | Pierston House and Pierston Farmhouse; Newlands Farm formerly Milton Garden Plants; The Old House; Barn immediately SE of Old House, Church of St Simon and St. Jude; Felthams, Church Lane. The Old Post House, Milton Croft, Croft Cottage, Stourbridge House, Stourbridge Cottage, Milton Farm House, Milton Farm Cottage. |



Milton Lodge

Table 12.10 – Colesbrook Character Area

| COLESBROOK | |
|---|---|
| OVERARCHING PATTERN AND SHAPE | The Hamlet of Colesbrook is detached from the Town and can be found east of the main road running north from Peacemarsh towards Milton-on-Stour. The settlement consists of a narrow lane leading to Purns Mill, famous for its association with the painter John Constable, and a spur road which winds its way down to the Ford and over a narrow bridge - built in Victorian times |
| PLOTS AND BUILDINGS | Apart from Purns Mill House the buildings are modest rural dwellings, generally traditional in terms of their scale and fenestration. Two farmhouses, single and terraced cottages, sit within fairly large plots amid orchards and grazing land. There are no suburban villas and very little modern intrusion has taken place. Colesbrook has retained its idyllic rural character |
| MATERIALS | The Mill and Farm workers cottages are mostly built in local natural stone, many of which are rendered. In general the area displays a mixture of slate and clay tiled roofs |
| HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPE | To the casual visitor there is a feeling that time has stood still. Virtually no traffic movement ensures the peace and contentment of this charming rural settlement. An abundant variety of trees, ancient hedgerows, and half hidden cottages line the route down to Shreen Water, beyond which lies Bowridge Hill |
| EXAMPLES OF BUILDINGS OF LOCAL CHARACTER | Purns Mill, Northmoor Farmhouse, 1 and 2 Purns Mill Cottages, The Cottage, Three Gables, 1 and 2 Northmoor Cottages, Colesbrook Cottage |

Design Principles

12.5. The following design principles have been based on the Town Design Principles, but adapted to take into account the wider area that this plan will apply to, and the design principles contained in the Local Plan and highlighted in consultations. These are intended to be applied to all new buildings, not just new housing developments.

Overarching pattern and shape of new development

- 12.6. What is clear from the character areas is the influence of the historic development of the area on the character of the layout of the key routes, which is still clearly evident today. Although places will continue to evolve, it is important that they retain some of the features and characteristics that help people to understand how the area has developed – rooted but not stuck in the past.
- 12.7. In many areas there is a relatively gentle transition between the town and countryside, with a more rural character to these lanes and gaps creating an attractive broken edge to the settlement – a feature not always designed into modern housing estates. There is a similar relationship between the town and the river corridors that flow through it, although these edges are not always accessible to the public.

Policy 24. The pattern and shape of development

New developments should respect the more historic street layouts where these are still evident. The importance of the historic routes into the town and the mix of uses along these routes should be acknowledged in the layout and design of any new developments.

All new developments adjoining or close to the rural edges of the town (including the river corridors) should be planned and designed to maintain the sensitive transition between the urban and rural environment, and opportunities taken to make this accessible to the public and protect important views from within the town to these more rural areas.

Plots and buildings, including the use of materials

- 12.8. The plot patterns reflect the evolution of land uses over time, and the different plot sizes and shapes have a bearing on the nature and scale of the buildings and how they relate to the streets around them. In general where areas have evolved over time, the plot sizes tend to be more mixed and irregular, where as planned estates typically show much more rhythmic plot patterns, that may change gradually over time as redevelopment occurs.
- 12.9. This character of any area is heavily influenced by the plot sizes and density of development, and although there can be benefits in terms of sustainability from achieving higher densities (particularly close to the town centre) this should not be at the expense of the character of the area. Many of the suburbs where there are larger gardens, mature trees rising above the rooflines, or substantial landscaping are highly valued for their amenity, wildlife and visual interest created by mature trees. There are very few tall buildings in the area, particularly in the suburbs which are almost exclusively one and two storey developments. Buildings tend to be more notable because of their historic interest and relation to key routes and spaces. The standard styles and building materials used in the more recent residential developments should be avoided as they bear little resemblance to the character of the town.
- 12.10. The relationship between any buildings and the street (and other public spaces) is also critical, in making sure that the area is visually interesting and also feels safe to walk along.
- 12.11. This can all be undermined by poor parking provision, where cars clutter the pavements or front gardens. In this modern age most houses will have one if not two or more cars, and people will often park on the street outside their door if it is safe and convenient to do so, particularly as many garages are often used more for storage. The design of new housing should also include adequately sized gardens to allow residents sufficient space to store recycling containers, erect outdoor washing lines and sheds for the storage of cycles and other gardening tools and machinery.
- 12.12. The design of buildings should ensure that they are fit for the future, taking into account national standards on energy and water efficiency, and connectivity with superfast broadband.

Policy 25. Plots and buildings

The density of new developments should respect the surrounding context and setting. The amount the building is set back from the road should take into account the degree of enclosure and front gardens typical of that area.

Continued...

Policy 25 continued...

New development should be of a high design quality and respect the qualities and character of nearby buildings and the area (and key buildings) in which it is situated. In general new development should not exceed the height or massing of existing buildings in the immediate locality, with local variation where possible relating to the building's role and function. A limited number of landmark buildings of increased height may be permissible providing there is sufficient open space around them to minimise their impact on the locality and that they are not overbearing in relation to key buildings or because of their elevated position. These should be located on (and face onto) on a key view or junction on an important route through the area.

Any new development should provide a positive face onto (and primary entrances visible from) the road (or both roads in the case of corner plots), in a style in keeping with the character of the local area. Blank elevations facing the street or public realm are to be avoided.

Parking provision should be carefully considered to ensure that it does not dominate the street scene or detract from the degree of enclosure provided by the general pattern of development.

Sufficient space should also be available on site to provide space to store recycling containers, amenity areas and storage associated with the building/s.

Hard and soft landscaping

- 12.13. As highlighted in the text above, the green character and rural charm of the area permeates through the town, and should be a real priority in the design of new development. Even within the town centre itself and the main arterial routes through, there are opportunities to enhance the character through the use of appropriate hard and soft landscaping.
- 12.14. Boundaries such as hedges, fences and walls should take reference from established examples in the locality in terms of height, species, building materials and styles and follow best practice. Important hedgerows should remain in the public domain and not be incorporated into private curtilages in the design of new developments.

Policy 26. Hard and soft landscaping

Good quality landscaping should be integral to the design of any new development to ensure it integrates successfully into the local environment.

All development proposals should consider the contribution trees make to the landscape setting of the town, the character of particular areas and the amenity value for local residents. Existing trees other landscape features that support local wildlife or are of local historic interest should be an integral part of any new development.

New boundaries and changes to existing boundaries should be in keeping with the locality and/or enhance the street scene.

Climate Change and Renewable Energy

- 12.15. Housing stock built in the timescale of this plan will probably last 100-150 years, through what is arguably the most important phase of our global transition to a low or zero net carbon civilization. It is clear that if we are to meet the Climate Change targets for an 80% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (compared to 1990 levels) we need to be building housing stock fit for that purpose.
- 12.16. Climate change emissions for house building lie both in the embodied energy of the building (generated by the materials and construction techniques) and in the long term energy use and heating.
- 12.17. The technology available to us continues to evolve and reduce in cost. However retrofitting these technologies is often more expensive, and less ideal, than either putting the available technology in place or allowing such future changes to happen. So it is important that careful consideration is given to designing housing, or making alterations or extensions to existing buildings, so that the best use is made of the available sustainable and environmentally friendly technologies, and so new and updated technologies can be readily retrofitted as they come online.
- 12.18. The adopted Local Plan covers these points in reasonable detail, as summarised in Table 12.11:

Table 12.11 – sustainable design requirements in the North Dorset Local Plan

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Policy 3 | New buildings should be designed to make best use of solar radiation and passive cooling through the incorporation of passive solar design principles, and incorporate measures to meet the current national targets for energy performance Development should incorporate measures to reduce water consumption, and measures to reduce the impact of excessive heat |
| 10.71 | Developers are required to submit detailed design information setting out how the design principles (which include energy efficiency and adaptability) have been addressed |

- 12.19. Developers are therefore encouraged to consider
- > insulation and energy conservation techniques, such as triple glazing, LED lighting and passive gain heating and cooling
 - > renewable energy production either as part of the design or how these could be fitted in the future, such as using roofs for fitting solar panels (including garage roofs)
 - > the potential to include district heating schemes on larger scale developments
 - > planting schemes that have carefully considered the need for shading and other microclimate controls
 - > the potential to include electric car charging points

13. HERITAGE

HERITAGE: *The heritage of the area that underpins its history and contributes to its local character is preserved, enhanced and valued.*

13.1. Gillingham has a rich history, with Roman and early Saxon occupation the Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin was mentioned in the Domesday Book, and the Royal Forest of Gillingham used as the recreational hunting retreat of Kings in the 12th and 13th centuries. Although at the beginning of the 17th century Gillingham was basically the four medieval settlements of Bay, Ham, Peacemarsh and Wyke (all set on the slightly higher ground above the river corridors), the area grew into a town in the 18th century based on a thriving silk-throwing industry.

What national policy says...

Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations (para 17)

What the Local Plan says...

Policy 5 – Any development proposal affecting a heritage asset (including its setting) will be assessed having regard to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of that asset and securing a viable use for it that is most consistent with its conservation

- 13.2. The railway arrived in 1859, closely followed by the Gillingham Pottery, Brick and Tile Co. in 1865. A cattle and stock market developed and the population almost doubles in the 19th century to over 3,300 residents. However the most growth by far has happened in the last 40 years.
- 13.3. Although there are a number of older buildings within the Town, the number of structures that have been listed are few in comparison. The majority of these are some of the original farm houses, and also includes civic structures such as the Town bridges and War Memorial.

Designated heritage assets

- 13.4. Gillingham has perhaps to the passer-by a surprisingly rich heritage, with the Grade I Listed Church of St Mary the Virgin in Gillingham High Street, and over 60 Grade II Listed Buildings. Most of these are clustered in the historic core, or scattered along the main arterial routes out of the town, and connecting to Milton-on-Stour.
- 13.5. There are also two Scheduled Monuments within the parish
- > [Longbury long barrow 600m north west of Slaughtergate Farm](#) off Longbury Hill Lane, and
 - > [Gillingham Park Pale boundary bank](#) that runs from Waterloo Farm into the parish of Motcombe

The scheduled monument of Kings Court Palace is just over the parish boundary in Motcombe.

- 13.6. There are currently three designated Conservation Areas in the parish, one covering the area around Lower High Street and The Square, the more recently designated area, Wyke, and one encompassing most of Milton-on-Stour. There is a Conservation Area Appraisal for Wyke, produced in 2011.

Changes to the Conservation Areas

- 13.7. Further areas are being considered for Conservation Area designation at Colesbrook and Bay. Consideration is being given to extending Gillingham Town Conservation area. This Neighbourhood Plan cannot make these changes, as Conservation Area status falls under different legislation. The Town Council will work with the Local Planning Authority to provide local knowledge and input into this process. The potential areas identified are shown in Figure 13.2.

Conservation Enhancement Plan for the Gillingham (Town Centre) Conservation Area

- 13.8. The town's growth has not always been sympathetic to its heritage assets, particularly in regard to its historic core. Traffic management (the most significant change being the town centre relief road in the early 1990s) and retailing changes (with the significant number of larger retail units now accessed from the relief road) have affected the use and character of the historic parts of the town centre, with some of the historic buildings and the surrounding environs falling into decline. One such example was the closure of the pharmacy founded by William Samways around 1860, which at its closure in 2008 was thought to be the oldest continuously used pharmacy in the country.

- 13.9. This decline has been particularly notable in the area around the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, the Town Bridge, Wyke Street, The Square and the Town Meadow. As a result of this downward spiral, the Town Conservation area was put on the 'At Risk Register' with English

Early visitors to the Town including John Constable in the early 19th Century were struck by its picturesque setting at the meeting of the three rivers – The Stour, Shreen and Lodden. The arrival of the railway in 1859 greatly changed the fortunes of the Town producing two generations of economic boom. It is only in the most recent decades that memories of the Town's industrial past have started to recede.

Heritage. The Gillingham (Dorset) Heritage Action Group was set up in response, working with the Town Council, the Local Planning Authority, the Neighbourhood Plan Group, Three Rivers Community Partnership, Tourism Association and representatives from local businesses. Wider membership of the Heritage Action Group includes volunteers, community groups, artists and Gillingham School. Together, they have developed a Conservation Enhancement Plan for this area to improve the area.

- 13.10. The aim of the Conservation Enhancement Plan is to preserve, enhance and value the architectural, built and social historic importance of the Town Conservation area and seek to secure its future. It focuses on the potential to promote the Conservation Area as a visitor destination in addition to the main High Street offer.
- 13.11. The Town Square and Town Meadow currently offer recreational activities such as arts centre and galleries, music and cultural events, pubs and restaurants, headquarters of the Gillingham Imperial Silver Band as well as daytime professional services. So there is scope to encourage similar businesses and activities into this area and promote it as a visitor destination for both day and night-time activities. This offer will add value to the High Street commercial activities with an improved street-scene to better link the two areas, and increase footfall from residents, visitors and tourists through the expanding heritage tourism market.

- 13.12. The Town Bridge could be improved and become a focal point of the town centre by opening up the limited views of the Grade II Listed Bridge and The River Shreen.
- 13.13. Heritage interpretation signage and better coordination of street furniture, colour schemes, materials and finishes could do much to enhance the visitor experience of the street scene.

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Figure 13.1 Conservation Enhancement Area



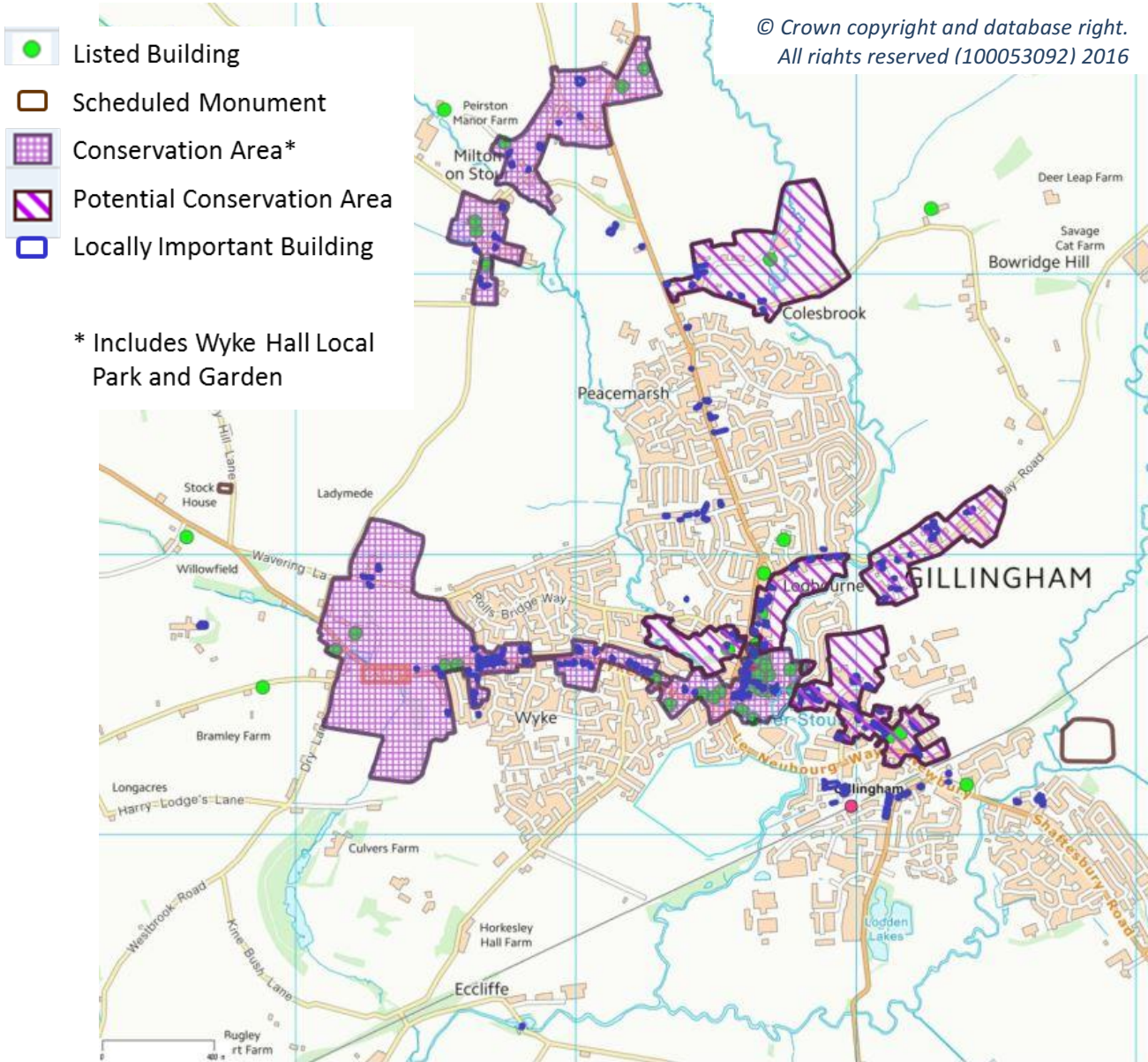
Policy 27. Conservation Enhancement Area
Proposals within the Gillingham Town Conservation Area should support the heritage enhancement of this area and have due regard to the Conservation Enhancement Plan.

Locally Listed Buildings and Structures

- 13.14. Local heritage listing is a means of identifying heritage assets that are valued as distinctive elements of Gillingham’s local historic environment, but have not been designated as a Listed Building, Scheduled Monument or Registered Park or Garden.
- 13.15. For example, the area around Wyke Hall is included in the list of Dorset Gardens of National and Local Significance produced by the Dorset Gardens Trust, and its significance is described as “remnants of a 19th century parkland setting providing a buffer from encroaching urban development. Former summer house and walled garden.” This area is wholly within the Wyke Conservation Area.
- 13.16. As part of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan Group has identified other locally important non-designated heritage assets. The basis for their selection relates to one or more of the following factors:
 - > historic or cultural importance / association (for example, the building was used by a well renowned person, or was used for key events or activities in the area’s history);

- > locally significant architecturally or relating to the historic character of an area (for example, as a good example of a period in the town’s history);

Figure 13.2 Heritage Assets including Local Listings



- 13.17. The listing can be based on the group value, historic records, the potential for archaeological interest, age and rarity. It may relate to a building or a space / landscape.
- 13.18. Locally important non-designated heritage assets have been identified below. A more detailed description of the buildings is provided in a separate report.

Policy 28. Protection of locally important heritage assets

Locally listed buildings and locally important buildings, Conservation Areas, scheduled monuments and the locally important parkland at Wyke Hall are heritage assets of the plan area and must be protected for future generations, in line with national and adopted Local Plan policies.

Where historic/locally important buildings and features are within the same site as a development proposal, their repair (if needed) and retention should be secured.

HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE

LISTED BUILDINGS

Chantry Ford, The Square; Chantry Cottage, The Square; Mill House, Barnaby Mead; Church Cottage, Church Walk; No: 1 Ivy Cottage & No: 2 Briar Cottage Church Walk; Town Bridge, High Street; The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Former premises of Senior & Godwin (now Rutters) High Street; Rawson Court (formerly the Vicarage).

The Phoenix, High Street; The Old Free School (formerly Cat Boutique); Former premises of Rutters & Rutters; Red Lion; War Memorial; Nos: 1 and 2, St Martin’s Square; Broadhayes, St Martin’s Square; Vicarage School Room; The Cottage, Cemetery Road (Turners Lane); Stour Motors (formerly Great House).

The Barton, Queen Street; Lime Tree House, Queen Street; The Lock up, South Street; Plank House and River Gate, Wyke Street; Queens Head and Queens Head Cottages – now Queens Court; Table Tombs, St. Mary’s Church Yard.

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

3, 7-8, 45 High Street, J & R Reynolds, Mayflowers Florist (rear store is listed), Coachman’s Corner, Farnfield’s, The Old Glove Factory, Shreen Veterinary Surgeons, Andrews and Palmer, Rorty Crankle, The Slade Centre, Building formerly known as St Mary’s Pharmacy and House,

Scenes, Lotus Garden & Ollie Bobs, St Mary’s Place, Museum Cottage, Laurel Cottage, 1 Church Walk, 1 and 2 Church Walk House, Corbin’s and Corbin’s Cottage, 3 St Martin’s Square, Myrtle Cottage, St Martin’s House, Tower House and Cypress House, Jubilee House, Portland Cottages, Octave Terrace, The Wine Bar, Ralton House, 1 & 2 Queen Street, Cemetery Lodge, Old Mortuary, Clarence House, Hamlet Cottage and Southcot, Victoria Terrace .



St Martin’s House

HIGH STREET AND NEWBURY (Modern Town Centre)

LISTED BUILDINGS:

The Laurels , Blackmore Vale House, Lodden Bridge Farmhouse.

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS:

The Methodist Church and Church Hall, The Town Hall and Police Station, The Baptist Church, Harwood House, Lloyds Bank, Cheapside House, Crockers, Keston, Penpol, Manse, Sandrian, The Home Company, Harwood Cottages, Hambledon’s, Lanark Villas, Dorset House, 19 & 23 High Street, Fairfield House, Townbridge House and Cottages behind High St, The Royal British Legion, Bracher’s Cottage and The Porch.



Town Hall and Police Station

LE NEUBOURG WAY, STATION ROAD AND BRICKFIELDS (SW of the Town Centre)

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Rose's Coal Office, Station House, Pottery Villas, Shaftesbury View, 1 & 2 Oldlands, Ashton and Oakfield Villas, NatWest Bank, Masonic Lodge, Laurel Villa, The Old Stables, Somdor House and Brick Store.



Former NatWest Bank (Le Neubourg Way, Station Road and Brickfields)



Vale Cottage (Ham)

HAM (South-East Gillingham)

LISTED BUILDINGS

Park Farmhouse, Gillingham Park Boundary Bank (Deer Park).

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

The Haywain, Kings Cottage and Vale House, The Elms, Vale Cottage, 20-28 Victoria Road, 1 – 5 Kings Court Road.

BAY (East of Gillingham)

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

12-18 Bay Road, 22-26 Bay Road, Elm View Terrace, Baybridge House, Tresillian, Meadowsweet and Baldric's End, Bay Cottage, Prospect, 1 and 2 Bay Villas, Primrose Cottage, End Cottage and Clematis Cottage, Little Stone, The Malthouse, 15 Bay Road, Bay Farmhouse and Barn, Cherry End Cottage.



Elm View Terrace

PEACEMARSH (Northern Gillingham)

LISTED BUILDINGS

Lodbourne Farmhouse

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Homeleigh, The Retreat, Greystones Cottages, Jessamine Cottage, Stour and Stower Cottages, Lotmore Cottage, Verlands Cottage, Tinglewood & Woodbine Cottages, Peacemash House, Peacemash Farm, The Dolphin Inn, Selma Cottage, Grosvenor House, Old Fir Tree Inn.

Peacemash Farmhouse



WYKE (Western Gillingham)

LISTED BUILDING

Wyke Brewery; Brewery House (now Milford House); Old Toll House; Wyke Bridge (carrying Wyke Street over the River Stour); Folly's End; Little Chantry; Knapp House.

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Rosebank, Ramleh, Trelawn and Trevena, Mount View House, Wyke Hill House, Grosvenor and Broadleigh, Wayside and Dene Hollow, Cedar Tree House, Hillcrest, Rolls Mead, Wyke House, Wyke Barn, Wyke Brewery Workers Cottages, Wyke (Benoni, Tredegar, Spencer House, Rowan House, Preston Cottage, Waverland, Clarendon, Wootton), The Old Post Office, Pound House, Long Path, The Stone House, The Old Coach House, South Lodge, The Old School House,

Roseville, Bells Cottage, The Buffalo Inn, Ashleigh & Rose Cottages, Lilac Cottage, Jubilee House, Coombe Rise, Brewery Workers Cottages, Wyke (Penyvan, Stockholm, Bayford Cottage, Jada, Brambles), Ansty Rose, Belmont, Melrose, Lyndale, Hill View, Wyke Cottage and Applegrove House, Oak Trees, St Andrews, Oakleigh, Fairview House, Elmcroft, North Lodge, 1 & 2 Slaughtergate Cottages, Slaughtergate Farm, Heron Lodge, Stock Hill House.



South Lodge

MILTON-ON-STOUR

LISTED BUILDINGS

Pierston House and Pierston Farmhouse; Newlands Farm formally Milton Garden Plants; The Old House; Barn immediately SE of Old House, Church of St Simon and St. Jude; Felthams, Church Lane.

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Milton Lodge, The Old Post House, Hillside Cottage, Milton Croft, Croft Cottage, Stourbridge House, Stourbridge Cottage, Kendalls House, Orchard and Beech Cottages, Dairy House, Milton Farmhouse, Milton Farm Cottage, Woolfields Farm, Woolfields Cottages, Kendalls Lodge.



Stourbridge House

COLESBROOK

LISTED BUILDINGS

Purns Mill House

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

Colesbrook Cottage, The Cottage, Purns Mill Cottage and Riverside, Three Gables, Northmoor Cottages, Northmoor House.

LISTED BUILDINGS OUTSIDE CHARACTER AREAS

Madjeston Farm House, Madjeston; Waterloo Farmhouse, Shaftesbury Road; Wessex Cottage, Mapperton Hill; Springfield, Bugley; Lawn Bridge, Motcombe; Bainly House, Bainly; Higher Langham House, Higher Langham, Sandley House, Sandley; Longbury Long Barrow: Wyke Farmhouse; Wyke Hall; The Granary and Church of St. George.

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET

Eccliffe Mill

14. HOW THE PLAN WORKS

GOVERNANCE: *This Neighbourhood Plan reflects the wishes and aspirations of the community as a whole. It will be used to guide decisions on future development – buildings, spaces and services. Everyone in the community, including elderly people and younger people, will be given the opportunity to talk about their experiences and be involved in solving problems and guiding the key decisions affecting the area. The Neighbourhood Plan will be kept under review to make sure it continues to be effective, and will be updated as our needs change.*

How this Plan will be used in planning decisions

- 14.1. Once this Neighbourhood Plan is finalised and becomes part of the development plan for the area, it is important that it is used. The Local Planning Authority will need to refer to the policies in the neighbourhood plan in making decisions on planning applications. They will also need to take the plan into account when they come to review their Local Plan.
- 14.2. Gillingham Town Council will continue to encourage developers to discuss schemes at an early stage with the local community, well before submitting a planning application, so that potential issues can be identified and addressed before any detailed designs are drawn up. The Town Council will be happy to advise developers looking to consult with local residents on how to get the most out of the consultation, through ensuring that it is appropriately publicised and run.
- 14.3. The Town Council will also use the Neighbourhood Plan in their responses to the Local Planning Authority when consulted on planning applications. The Town Council will make clear which policies are most relevant, and how they should influence the decision.

How specific projects will come forward

- 14.4. No single organisation is responsible for taking forward this Neighbourhood Plan, it will be a joint effort involving developers, service providers, the Local Planning Authority and Town Council, and many other organisations including those responsible for the wider environment.
- 14.5. The Local Planning Authority collect funding for infrastructure from new development, and once the community infrastructure levy is in place, 25% of this funding will be given directly to the Town Council to spend on local infrastructure projects. This money will be ring-fenced by the Town Council to help fund the various community facilities and public realm improvements highlighted in the plan, primarily the open space / leisure facilities. Where possible, the Town Council will bid for additional funding through grant schemes. In addition, the Town Council will liaise with the Local Planning Authority and infrastructure providers to suggest key priorities for spending in the local area.

Monitoring and Review

- 14.6. Gillingham Town Council will aim to produce an annual review on the Neighbourhood Plan in the form of where policies are working as intended, and new issues that may come to light which may mean certain policies are overtaken by events. It may be possible for some of these issues to be reviewed as part of the Local Plan, and the Town Council will work with the Local Planning Authority to this end. Otherwise they will trigger a review when it is clear that a refresh would be beneficial overall.

15. USEFUL DOCUMENTS

The following is a list of the documents referred to in this Plan

- > Assessing the growth potential of Gillingham (referred to as the Gillingham Growth Study), produced by Atkins for Dorset County Council and North Dorset District Council (2009)
- > Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Waste Plan (yet to be finalised – draft published)
- > Conservation Area Appraisal for Wyke, Gillingham, North Dorset District Council (2011)
- > Dorset Clinical Services Review (yet to be finalised – draft reports published)
- > Dorset Gardens of National and Local Significance, Dorset Gardens Trust (2014)
- > Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Gillingham Historic Urban Characterisation, Dorset County Council (2011)
- > Employment Land Review, Review of Existing Sites, North Dorset District Council (2007)
- > Gillingham Landscapes and Open Spaces Assessment Report for North Dorset District Council, R Burden (2003)
- > Gillingham Town Design Statement, Gillingham Town Council (2012)
- > Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard, Fields in Trust (FIT) (2015)
- > Gillingham Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (yet to be finalised)
- > Joint Retail Assessment, produced by Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Ltd by Christchurch, East Dorset, North Dorset and Purbeck Councils (2008)
- > Manual for Streets 2, Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (2010)
- > National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
- > North Dorset Local Plan, North Dorset District Council (2016) including the saved policies of the 2003 Local Plan
- > Southern Extension Infrastructure Delivery Scheme (yet to be published)
- > Southern Extension Masterplan Framework (yet to be finalised – draft published)
- > The Portas Review - an independent review into the future of our high streets, Mary Portas (2011)
- > Three Rivers Partnership Gillingham Town Plan (2007, action plan reviewed and updated annually)
- > Village and Community Halls Design Guidance Note, Sport England (2001)