



# Ongar Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2033 Submission Version August 2021



Chipping Ongar Town Centre

photo by J Merrett

Prepared on behalf of Ongar Town Council by Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group

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# Forewords

## From the Ongar Town Council

Ongar has faced many challenges over the years, but further changes are ahead.

Within Epping Forest District Council's Local Plan 2011-2033, Ongar is required to provide a significant number of new dwellings within a few years.

A Neighbourhood Plan enables the local community to influence these changes and play a much stronger role in shaping the area in which we live and work.

Neighbourhood planning provides the opportunity for communities to set out a positive vision for how they would like their community to develop over the period of the district's Local Plan, in ways that meet identified local need and make sense for local people.

The Key Benefits are:

- It can include policies to retain local character in new building design or alterations to existing buildings
- It can protect or propose the creation of open spaces, (such as green gaps, nature reserves/wildlife corridors, allotments, sports pitches, play areas, parks and gardens, and important historic assets)
- It enables us to ensure that we can protect the things we value the most
- It enables changes to be managed effectively and ensures they benefit our community
- It allows us to encourage developers to build what we believe our community needs and requires, (such as family homes and developments more suited to elderly residents)

Ongar Town Council has been working in partnership with the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group to produce a plan for Ongar and would like to thank all those involved for their dedicated work to produce it.

**Kevin Piggott**  
Chairman  
Ongar Town Council

## **From the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group**

Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group would like to thank residents and businesses for their huge input over several years, to enable us to produce Ongar Neighbourhood Development Plan on behalf of Ongar Town Council.

Although a Neighbourhood Plan is essentially only Planning Policies, our engagement with the community work has also brought considerable local consensus about the need for other areas of enhancement that cannot become a planning 'Policy'. These have been included as a separate Appendix document of Projects/Actions and includes as Regeneration of Chipping Ongar Town centre, enhancement of footpaths, development of Visitor economy etc. which will build on and enforce the aims of Ongar Neighbourhood Plan and the community's aspirations for the future

Following a Public Meeting in July 2017, Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group was set up to be able to steer the detail and nature of Epping Forest District's intended development in the Civil Parish of Ongar.

By late 2016, Epping Forest District Council's Draft Local Plan was already well-advanced including detailed strategic policies for the whole District. EFDC had also allocated numbers of new housing and selected actual housing sites, including for Ongar.

Ongar residents value their small distinctive rural town of historic Chipping Ongar with outlying settlements and surrounding countryside. Whilst acknowledging the need for more homes in the locality, residents wanted to shape its future development positively to be able to

- retain and enhance the core of Chipping Ongar medieval town enclosure as a community activity hub for 21<sup>st</sup> century with sustainable development within close walking distance
- ensure development did not detract from the character and design of the neighbourhood's built or natural environments and to enhance those environments where possible.

Local opinion was also that some development over the last few decades had resulted in harm to the character of parts of the civil Parish, and that the street scene has become dominated by motor vehicles. Ongar Neighbourhood Plan aims to redress that balance for future developments

**Mary Dadd**

**Chairman**

**Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group**

# Introduction

## 1.1 Ongar Neighbourhood Plan

This document is a neighbourhood plan for Ongar. The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan policies is to guide development within the parish. When a Neighbourhood Plan is made, it forms part of the statutory development plan for the area, together with the adopted Local Plan. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the policies of both the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The process of producing Ongar Neighbourhood Plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible, in addition to putting together a robust evidence base. The topic areas reflect matters of considerable importance to Ongar, its residents, businesses, and community groups.



The Ongar Neighbourhood Area was designated in 2017 and covers the Civil Parish of Ongar. A map of the area is on the following page.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2 Time Period

This Neighbourhood Plan covers the period from the date it is 'made' (being the date it has passed local referendum) to the end of 2033.

## 1.3 Actions

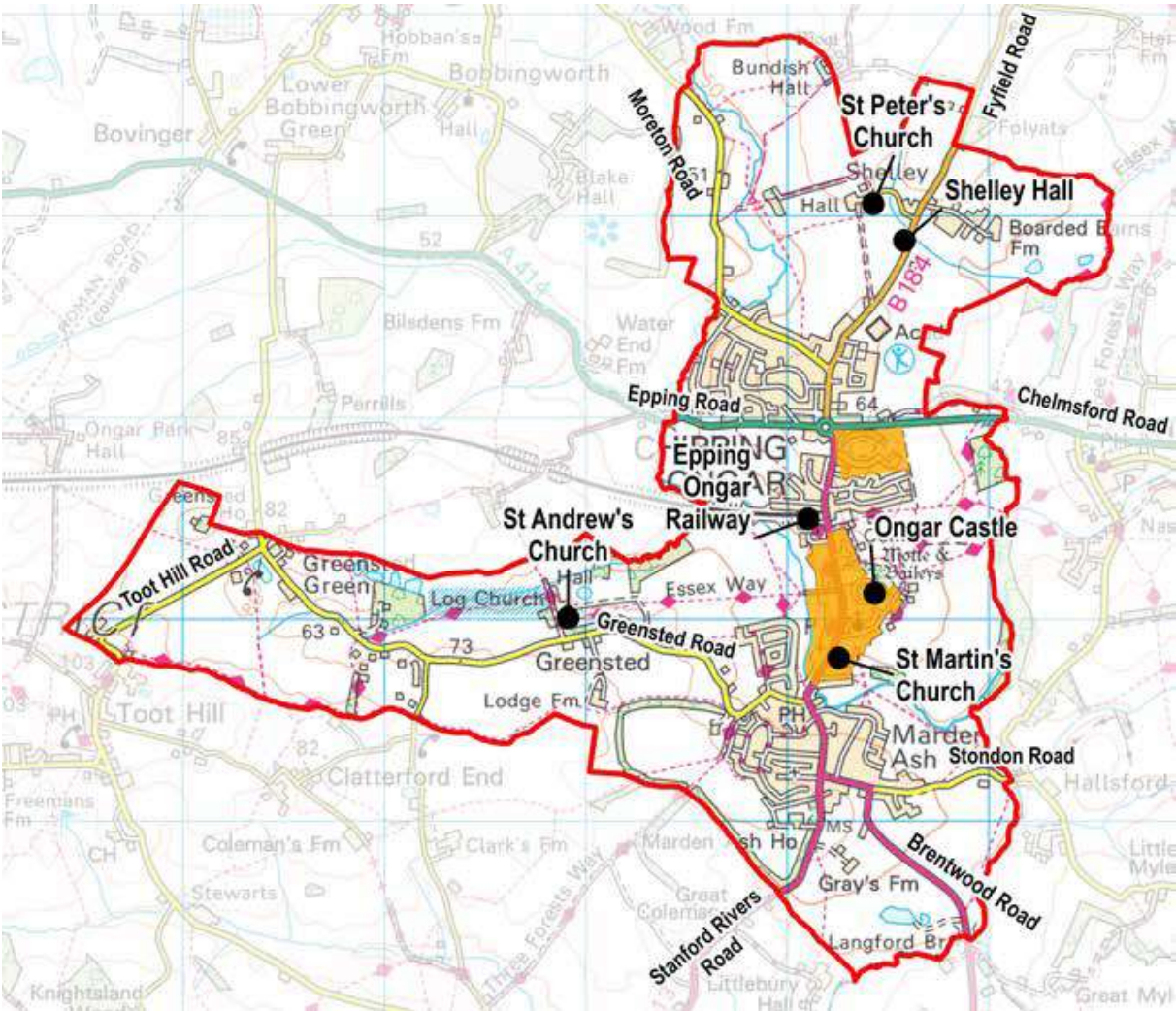
Whilst preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, a number of actions have been identified which are not specifically related to land use matters and therefore outside the scope of Neighbourhood Plan policies. These actions and projects are included in an accompanying Projects and Action Plan Appendix of Ongar Neighbourhood Plan. The Action Plan is not part of the statutory neighbourhood plan, and the actions will be addressed by Ongar Town Council and/or other organisations.

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<sup>1</sup> Although excluded from matters for Neighbourhood Plans, it is noted that Essex County Council is the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for Ongar. See Further Guidance section at the end of this document for more information, including details of the Sand and gravel deposits in the south and west which are within a Mineral Safeguarding Area.

**1.4 Review**

Ongar Town Council, as the Neighbourhood Plan body, will be responsible for monitoring and periodically reviewing the Plan, to respond to changing circumstances.



*The Civil Parish Boundaries of Ongar with the conservation areas in yellow.*



# Overview of Ongar

## 2.1 Location and Context

The Ongar Neighbourhood Area covers 12 km<sup>2</sup> (902 hectares) and mirrors the Civil Parish of Ongar, in Epping Forest District. It is located 5km (3 miles) east of North Weald Bassett, 9km (6 miles) east of Epping, 11km (7 miles) south east of Harlow, 12km (8miles) north west of Brentwood, 15km (11 miles) west of Chelmsford. It is 33km (21 miles) north-east of Central London and 32km (20 miles) away from Stansted Airport.



*An aerial view of the historic centre of Chipping Ongar*

The Civil Parish consists of the central historic town of Chipping Ongar located on a tongue of higher ground between two river valleys – The River Roding to the east and its tributary Cripsey Brook to the west. The surrounding smaller settlements of Greensted, Greensted Green, Marden Ash and Shelley lie within 2km of the town centre, each with a distinct character. These settlements are surrounded by inhabited countryside.

## 2.2 Nature of the Area



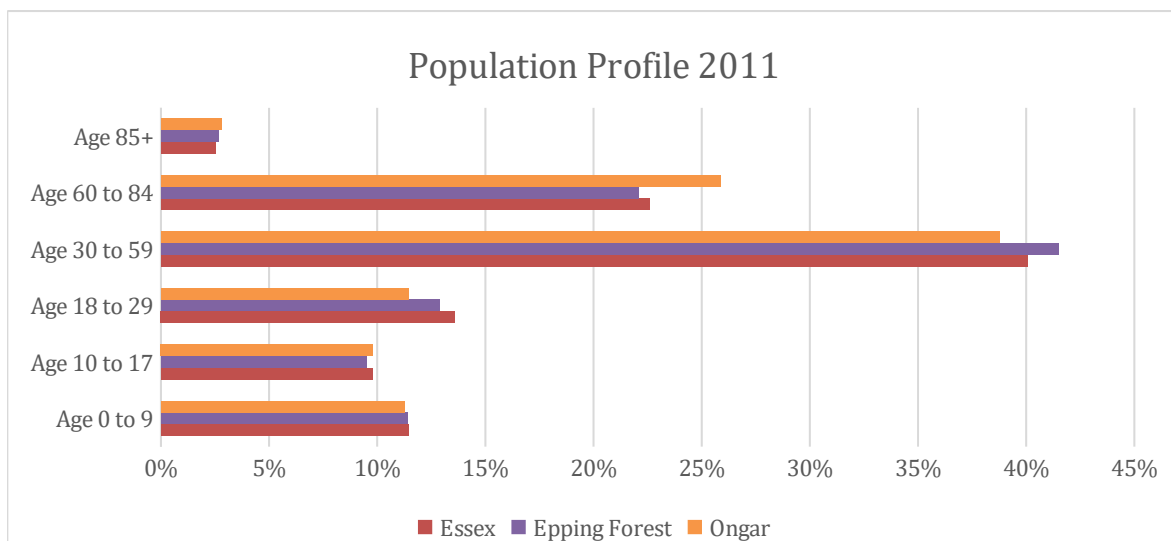
Of its 902 hectares (2229 acres), 8% is developed, with the remaining 92% Metropolitan Green Belt, 86% of which is farmed with the remaining made up of 6% woodland and ponds and water courses. This substantial amount of surrounding countryside provides a tranquil backdrop for residents and a range of ecological services including food production, carbon capture and opportunities for flood control. The responses to the Residents Survey revealed that 86% felt that Ongar is a friendly place in which to live with a strong sense of community. The historic centre of Chipping Ongar has retained much of its charm with a significant number of listed buildings and two Conservation Areas. In the residents' survey, 94% either agreed or

strongly agreed that it is Chipping Ongar as an historic town centre which adds character to the area.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.3 Population

Forty percent of Ongar residents are aged 30-59 and over 55% are 18-59. Thus, Ongar's housing and amenities will be expected to continue to focus on young families attracted to the rural town and surrounding countryside with good local schools. However, in a nation with an ageing population 27% Ongar residents were over 60<sup>3</sup> and have lived in Ongar for many years and indicates a stable community.<sup>4</sup>

In 2011, the population of Ongar was 6,251. The age distribution is broadly similar to the district and county, however there are slightly more older residents (aged 60+). The average age in the parish is approximately 43 years, which is lower than the Epping Forest district average age of 46 years, but higher than the county level of 41 years.



Between 2001 and 2011 the population grew by 182 people (2.9%) but did not change significantly in terms of the overall age profile.<sup>5</sup>

## 2.4 Other Evidence

More detailed evidence on a range of subjects is included in the policy rationales, later in this document.

<sup>2</sup> Residents Survey Feb 2018 in Evidence File

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks102ew>

<sup>4</sup> Residents Survey Feb 2018 in Evidence File

<sup>5</sup> State of the Parish by Navigus in Evidence File

# Engagement

## 3.1 Engagement Activities

The Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group (steering group), acting on behalf of Ongar Town Council, has undertaken a range of community and stakeholder engagement activities<sup>6</sup>. More details are in the Schedule of Evidence files. These have targeted residents of all ages and businesses and other stakeholders and include:

- A web site was established for the neighbourhood plan;
- A Facebook page was created;
- A Residents Survey<sup>7</sup> was delivered to all households in February 2018 to gain the views of those living in the area; Additional surveys were undertaken to look at some issues in more detail, such as Town Centre, Sports and Recreational Facilities;
- A Youth Survey involved all pupils in the local secondary school;
- There have been frequent meetings, workshops, and attendance at local events such as the school fete, Town Festival and a two day exhibition at Budworth Hall;
- Some events have included SWOT analysis<sup>8</sup>;
- Regular articles have appeared in Ongar News;
- A range of local groups and societies were approached for opinions and evidence;
- The meetings of the steering groups have been open, well-attended and with opportunities for people to ask questions;
- There has been ongoing Interaction with the county council departments e.g. Education and Highways, and local district council officers at EFDC, the local planning authority, as well as national bodies such as Historic England and Environmental bodies and Sport England.



*Many local residents attended the 2 day event in June 2019*

## 3.2 Outcomes of Engagement

There has been a high degree of consistency in responses from the various events and questionnaires. Detailed analysis of these was made available on the neighbourhood plan web site and is now with evidence documents.

A summary of key issues identified through engagement and Surveys include:

- Although there is a good range of community facilities and amenities in the area, including shopping, sports and recreation there are some deficiencies e.g. a Town Park, Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP), playing pitches and other open spaces.
- Additional community facilities will be needed as the local population increases through new housebuilding which will also create a demand for additional car parking in the town centre and health and leisure centre
- More local employment is required.

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<sup>6</sup> Document of Engagement is in the Evidence file

<sup>7</sup> Residents Survey 2018 in Evidence File

<sup>8</sup> SWOT analysis results are in the Evidence File

- People use a range of modes of transport. However, those relying more on cars especially for commuting refer to public transport facilities being too infrequent
- Domination of motor vehicles in the public realm and residential areas, detracts from the distinctive local character and ambience.
- The local natural environment and green spaces area is valued. More green spaces are required.
- The local network of footpaths is valued and well-used.
- A mix of house types are required, in particular family accommodation; new homes need to be able to accommodate home working; and some affordable housing is required locally

These are general themes, and a range of more detailed issues were identified through engagement.

The issues identified, together with others from analysis of the evidence base, have informed the themes and content of the policies.

The steering group used the outcomes of engagement to inform its representations on the emerging Local Plan.

Further references to outcomes of engagement are made in the policy rationales, later in this plan.

From the engagement outcomes a Vision for the future to 2033 was formed and is the basis for the Aims of the Neighbourhood Plan and Appendix-Projects and Actions

### **3.3 Vision for Ongar in 2033**

“Ongar will be a vibrant small rural town, with good access to the surrounding countryside. It is proud of its historic heritage and friendly atmosphere

New developments do not detract from Ongar’s distinctive character, but have respected its historic form and design. New green corridors have been included to protect our varied wildlife.

Chipping Ongar Town Centre Conservation Area has been enhanced as an attractive pedestrian friendly location with additional services and community facilities to ensure that our larger population still has its day to day needs met within the town.

Our leisure and sports facilities and amenities have been improved with additional facilities to cater for our active residents. Ongar Schools have enough places for our children; and good health resources are local.“

# Aims

## 4.1 Neighbourhood Plan Aims

From analysis of evidence, and also the outcomes of community engagement, the following aims have been identified:

1. **Enabling rural and urban regeneration of the Parish.**
2. **Creating a more vibrant historic High Street in Chipping Ongar.**
3. **Ensuring development is sustainable, well-designed and creates a distinctive local identity.**
4. **Protecting or enhancing the historic, natural and rural environments of Ongar.**
5. **Creating more sustainable live/work patterns.**
6. **Maintaining and expanding the range of local community facilities and amenities.**

## 4.2 Achieving the Aims

These aims are translated into a set of policies grouped under three headings, as follows:

### **Rural Regeneration**

- Policy ONG-RR1: Employment and Rural Diversification**
- Policy ONG-RR2: Chipping Ongar High Street**
- Policy ONG-RR3: New Housing Mix and Standards**
- Policy ONG-RR4: Broadband**

### **Environment and Design**

- Policy ONG-ED1: Local Character and Design**
- Policy ONG-ED2: Design and Character in the Chipping Ongar Conservation Area**
- Policy ONG-ED3: Historic Buildings**
- Policy ONG-ED4: Sustainable Design**
- Policy ONG-ED5: Natural Environment**
- Policy ONG-ED6: Landscape and Amenity Buffer Zones**

### **Community and Transport Infrastructure**

- Policy ONG-CT1: Local Green Space**
- Policy ONG-CT2: Community, Cultural, Leisure and Sports Facilities**
- Policy ONG-CT3: Transport and Movement**
- Policy ONG-CT4: Infrastructure Priorities**
- Policy ONG-CT5: Footpaths and Cycle Route**

These policies are contained in chapters 6-8 of this document.

# Policies

## 5.1 The Basic Conditions

Neighbourhood Plans must meet the “basic conditions”, set out in planning legislation. This is tested through the independent examination.

The Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans are that:

- They must have appropriate regard to national policy;
- They must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- They must be in general conformity with strategic local policy;
- They must be compatible with EU obligations;

In addition, Neighbourhood Plans must be compatible with human rights legislation.

## 5.2 National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)<sup>9</sup> requires Neighbourhood Plans to set out a positive vision for the future of the local area and planning policies to guide decisions on planning applications. This Neighbourhood Plan has been written, having regard to national planning policy and guidance on a range of issues.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies three overarching objectives to achieving sustainable development. The Neighbourhood Plan positively addresses the economic, social and environmental objectives of the NPPF, taking account of the character, needs and opportunities of the area. The National Planning Policy Framework Guidelines as well as The National Design Guide 2019 (rev in 2021) and National Model Design Code 2021 provide further detail and explanation.

## 5.3 Sustainable Development

A key principle of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is defined clearly in its Paragraph 11. In response, the Neighbourhood Plan contributes positively by identifying opportunities to meet development needs of the neighbourhood area. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan seek to ensure the viability and sustainability of our diverse rural town.

Growth across the Neighbourhood Area of Ongar should not be to the detriment or loss of Green Belt, although there are some changes to the boundaries proposed in EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033<sup>10</sup> and will be concentrated around the potential development of strategic sites, the Town Centre and appropriate infill. The Neighbourhood Plan strongly promotes the re-use of existing buildings, particularly those in Chipping Ongar Town Centre. This will be

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<sup>9</sup>National Policy Planning Framework, July 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>10</sup> Sites in EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033 will rely on changes to the Green Belt boundaries

augmented by the usual smaller-scale incremental development that is typical of rural market towns.

## **5.4 Local Strategic Policies**

Epping Forest District Council as the Local Planning Authority defines which policies are to be considered 'strategic' in its Local Plan, for the purpose of neighbourhood planning. The District Council considers that all of the policies set out in the current adopted Combined Policies of Epping Forest District Local Plan 1998 and Alterations 2006 (published 2008) to be strategic for the purpose of neighbourhood planning. The Neighbourhood Plan helps to achieve the spatial strategy in the Local Plan.

Whilst the basic conditions relate to adopted strategic local policies, it is advisable to take account of the emerging Epping Forest Local Plan 2011 to 2033. The evidence behind the emerging local plan is part of the evidence base for the neighbourhood plan (where relevant). Following the period when representations were invited on the soundness of the submission version of the Local Plan, the Epping Forest District Council Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in public on 21 September 2018. This stage of EFDC Local Plan remains ongoing (at the time of this Regulation 14 Consultation Version of Ongar Neighbourhood Plan).

The Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group ONPCG) has worked in liaison with Epping Forest District Council throughout the preparation of the plan to reduce the risk of disparities between the emerging Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **5.5 EU Obligations and Human Rights**

This Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with EU obligations and has been subject to ongoing engagement and an Equalities Assessment. The policies within this plan have been prepared with due care and consideration to ensure they are compatible with EU obligations and the Neighbourhood Plan has been screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA).

## **5.6 Policies for the Neighbourhood Area**

The policies in the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan are led by public opinion and based on evidence gathered from official statistics and existing publications as well as reports commissioned for the Plan. Key evidence is listed in the Schedule of Evidence at the end of this plan. In addition, local surveys, views, comments and ideas expressed by the local community have been taken into account.

The policies in this Neighbourhood Plan seek to deliver the aspirations and needs of the local community, within the framework of meeting the basic conditions and other legal requirements.

# Rural Regeneration

## 6.1 Purposes

The purposes of the policies in this section are:

- Enabling rural and urban regeneration of the Parish;
- Creating a more vibrant historic High Street in Chipping Ongar;
- Ensuring a mix of housing to meet local need;
- Creating more sustainable live/work patterns and accommodating broadband.

The policies in this Chapter enable growth, whilst also helping to ensure that such growth meets local need and is sustainable. They need to read in conjunction with those policies on Community and Transport Infrastructure and Environment and Design.

The Neighbourhood Plan aims to enable housing and a balanced mix of employment opportunities for the existing and future community, whilst also regenerating Chipping Ongar High Street.



## 6.2 Rationale: Employment and Rural Diversification

Ongar has little local employment within the Civil Parish, outside of the town centre, and employment has diminished further in the last 10 years. The top types of employment in Ongar match those living in Epping Forest and Essex. These are Public Administration, Health and Education, Wholesale and Retail trade and Construction. More than half of workers commute outside the area, including to London<sup>11</sup>.

Ongar parish includes a high proportion of micro and small as well as medium enterprises; many are run from residents' own homes. Other places of employment are a number of farms and agricultural-related businesses, commercial services such as pubs, and the Ongar Business Centre, formerly known as the Essex Technology and Innovation Centre. Since 2012 the Epping Ongar Heritage Railway has operated a very popular resource that brings 46,000 (2019) visitors to Chipping Ongar.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the Epping Ongar Railway there are other opportunities to link Ongar's tourism attractions to those in Epping Forest and nearby Secret Nuclear Bunker and Mud Races. These will be encouraged as further Action Projects. Bringing in more visitors will help to make the Town Centre and other businesses more viable.



*The Epping Ongar Railway (above), St Andrew's Church at Greensted (right) and Essex Way (top right) attract thousands of visitors to the area every year.*



New employment sites in Ongar or just outside will help to make a more sustainable settlement. Consultation with local businesses and residents has identified support for rural diversification, home based businesses, agriculture, tourism, light industrial and other businesses that can operate in the rural environment.

<sup>11</sup> State of the Parish by Navigus in Evidence File

<sup>12</sup>Epping Ongar Railway Press Release January 2020

Paragraph 84 of the NPPF 2021 demonstrates support for a prosperous rural economy through policies and decisions which enable rural business growth in new and converted buildings, agricultural diversification, tourism and leisure, local services and community facilities.

The emerging Local Plan identifies within the economic profile for the District (Paragraph 1.31) that:

*“Economic activity rates in the District are high for both men and women, with 78.5% of 16-64 year olds in employment which is similar to the average for England (78%) and slightly lower than the East of England average (80.2%). Within this, male employment (81%) is higher than female employment (76.1%). At 17%, self-employment makes up a significant proportion of overall employment and is higher than the East of England and England averages.*

## **Policy ONG-RR1: Employment and Rural Diversification**

### **Policy ONG-RR1: Employment and Rural Diversification**

- 1. Development that creates local employment and/or diversifies the rural economy will be supported. This includes new facilities to support the visitor economy, new community facilities, serviced offices, co-working or enterprise space.**
- 2. This support is subject to there being no significant adverse impact on:**
  - a. The amenities of residential properties through noise, disturbance, vibration, privacy or overlooking matters;**
  - b. The open and rural character of the area;**
  - c. The vitality of Chipping Ongar High Street**

### **Interpretation of ONG-RR1**

The policy enables development that provides local employment, subject to consideration of impacts. More specific requirements for the High Street are contained in Policy ONG-RR2.

Policy ONG-CT3 (Transport and Movement) sets out transport requirements for employment development, including car park spaces and more sustainable forms of transport.

### 6.3 Rationale: Chipping Ongar High Street

Like many communities, residents feel the heart of Ongar is the town centre at Chipping Ongar and this is what provides its sense of place and local identity. With the decline of retail in High Streets nationally, it is important that other services and activities are located in the town centre to ensure it remains a central community hub for people to meet and socialise.



*The Budworth Hall is a valuable meeting place which brings people to Chipping Ongar Town Centre.*

The decline in Chipping Ongar’s retail and historic Market occurred over the last few decades. By the end of 2019, the footfall was low, and the centre had lost its banks and doctors’ surgeries, with many independent retailers also gone. There are more empty shops in the primary retail frontage and empty offices than ever before, including during the last recession<sup>13</sup>, but even more concerning has been the frequency that its small independent shops have changed tenancy and the shorter opening hours offered. The Coronavirus pandemic of 2020 added to the uncertainty of the economic viability of further businesses and accelerated the need for a change of focus in the town centre.

With existing low overall footfall, the viability for small businesses is difficult. Government has adopted several schemes to diversify town centre uses and regenerate High Streets. EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033 has recognised the need to diversify the range of uses in town centres<sup>14</sup> A district Town Manager covering Chipping Ongar appointed in 2021, will oversee various regeneration proposals including those put forward by the local community. By encouraging town centre uses other than retail, Ongar Neighbourhood Plan policies will enable regeneration of Chipping Ongar town centre as a vibrant destination place with a new purpose, in an attractive historic setting, close by recreational and leisure amenities and accessible countryside. This would also increase community cohesion and could reduce reliance on cars for local journeys, and also increase visitor potential. Alongside the planning policies there are a number of specific Actions<sup>15</sup> that would strengthen and complement planning policies. These include improving the public realm of the historic centre, which has had no investment for over 20 years, so now needs to be addressed. In addition, maintenance of the highway and pavements has been poor, and the large volume of through traffic, especially 44 tonne HGVs, is detracting from the ambience<sup>16</sup>.

Making more efficient use of land could involve consolidating existing surface car parks into well designed multi-storey, underground car parks or car barns or building over surface parks<sup>17</sup> in order to also accommodate additional community, recreation and leisure facilities, thus supporting diversification and the regeneration of the town centre. This is supported

<sup>13</sup> EFDC Local Plan Evidence Base [www.efdclocalplan.org/local-plan/evidence-base/](http://www.efdclocalplan.org/local-plan/evidence-base/) EB1008 Arup Town Centres Review 2016 and EB1006 Town Centres Study Roger Tym & Partners 2010

<sup>14</sup> EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033 Policy E2 part D

<sup>15</sup> See accompanying ONP Appendix -Projects and Actions and EFDC Ongar Regeneration Study and Proposals Paul Messenger 2020 in Evidence Files

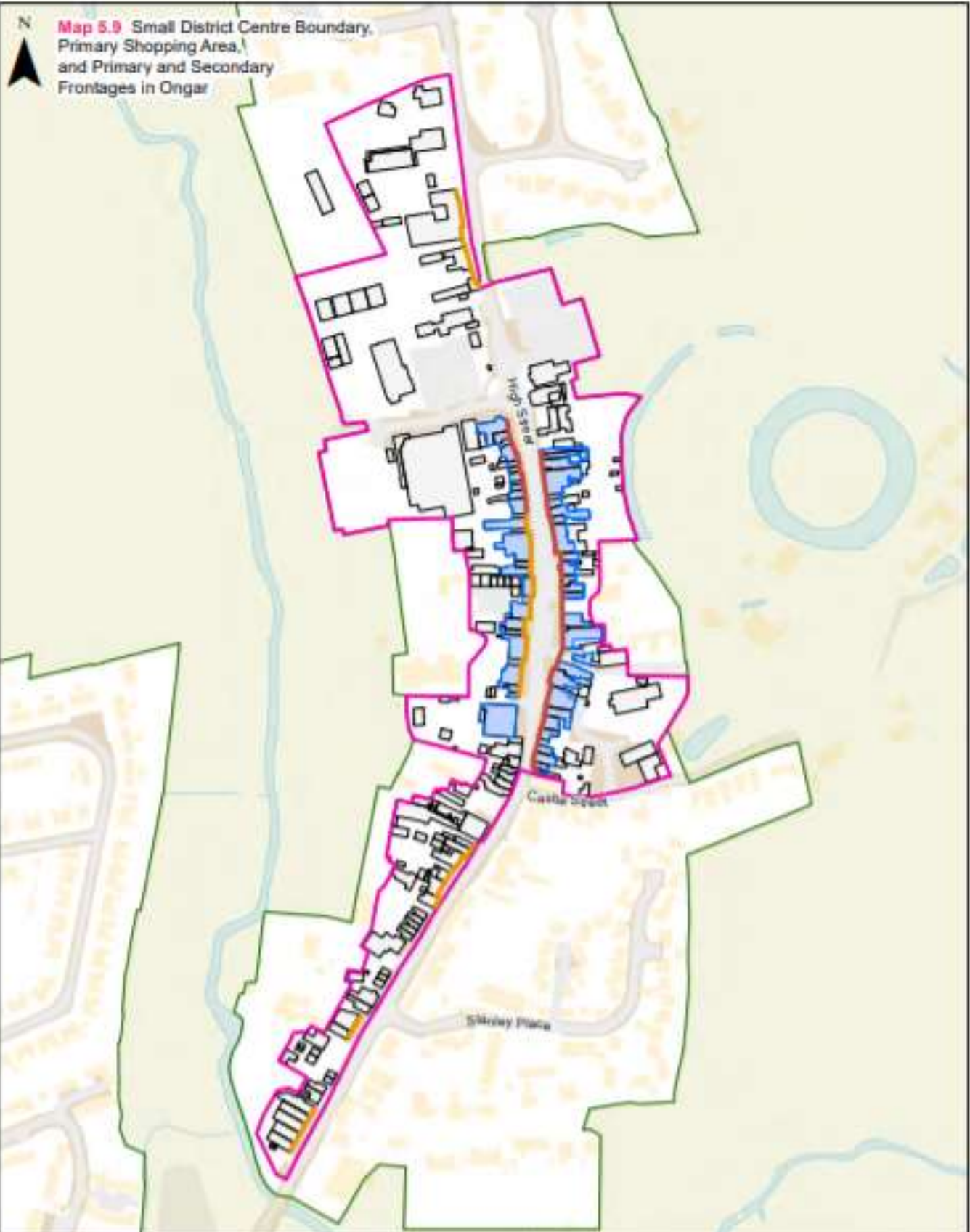
<sup>16</sup> Supported by Residents Survey Q 5.2 in Evidence Files

<sup>17</sup> See National Model Design Code 2021 Section U1.i efficient use of land

and could include cultural and youth facilities well positioned in the centre of the historic town, also attracting more people into Chipping Ongar Town Centre itself. High standards of design would be required in context and appropriate to the Historic Town. National Design Guide and National Model Design Code 2021 contain more design detail.

Section 7 Paragraph 86 of the NPPF covers vitality of town centres and state that policies and decisions should make a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation by allowing a responsive mix of uses reflecting their distinctive characters, supporting markets and looking to allocate sites over a period looking at least 10 years ahead. Paragraph 53 enables the protection against the loss of essential core of a primary shopping area that would undermine the vitality and viability.

An anticipated increase in visitors from successful regeneration will also necessitate an increase in overall car space numbers and possible demand for a Coach car park. Coach car parking could be included in an improved bus stop and terminus near Ongar Bridge. See also Transport and Movement Section 8.4 and Policy ONG-CT3



**Map 5.9** Small District Centre Boundary, Primary Shopping Area, and Primary and Secondary Frontages in Ongar

Epping Forest District Local Plan  
 Submission Version  
 December 2017

 Epping Forest District Council

Drawing No  
 EPDC-CP-00101-Rev2

Date: December 2017

Scale: 1:5,000 @A4

**Map 5.9**  
 Small District Centre Boundary,  
 Primary Shopping Area,  
 and Primary and Secondary  
 Frontages in Ongar

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The Local Plan should be read as a whole  
 Proposals will be judged against all strategic  
 policies.

Legend	
	Town / Small District Centre Boundary
	Primary Shopping Area
	Primary Frontage
	Secondary Frontage
	Green Belt Boundary
	Proposed Secondary Frontage

## Policy ONG-RR2: Chipping Ongar High Street

Policy ONG-RR2: Chipping Ongar High Street

1. Within the defined Small District Centre Boundary, changes of use or reuse of vacant ground floor frontage units will be supported where it involves uses that complement or enhance the vitality and viability of the High Street.
2. For **ground** floor units, town centre uses (open to the general public) will be supported, include retail, food and drink and community facilities. Uses not open to the general public will be resisted in ground floor frontage units within Chipping Ongar Conservation Area.
3. Use of upper floors will be supported, where such uses would complement and have no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the High Street. Suitable uses include business and residential.
4. Redevelopment of surface car parks for uses that support the vitality of the High Street will be supported, providing sufficient provision is made either within the development or nearby.

## Interpretation of ONG-RR2

The policy creates a flexible approach to new uses in the High Street, recognising the importance of a mix of town centre functions, in addition to retail. Joint use of buildings such as the library, for a range of services will be supported. The policy seeks to discourage change of use from shop to residential on Frontage ground floors particularly within the historic medieval town enclosure, to ensure there are a critical number of town centre function premises to serve the community and retain its vitality and viability.

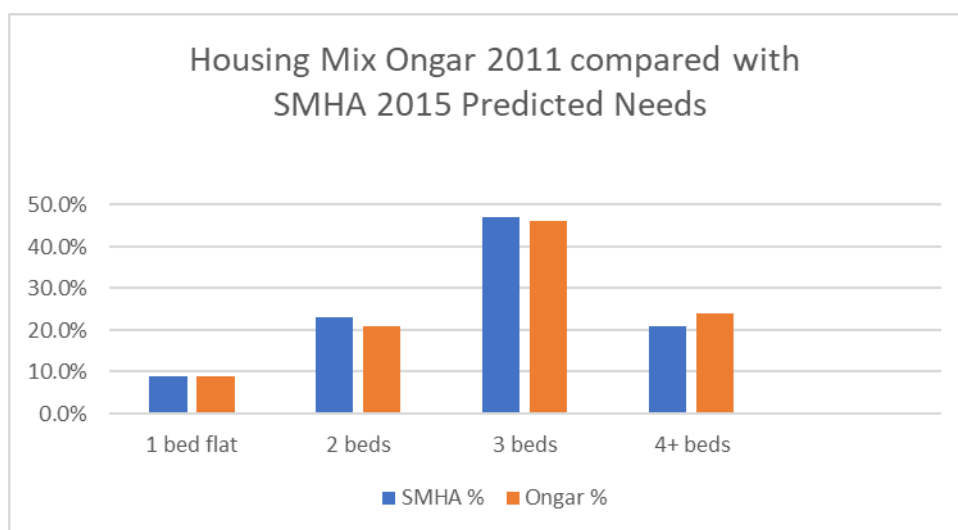
The policy enables more efficient use of the land to accommodate both car parking and community use, for example the re-use of surface area for a community amenity with car parking above, or undercroft car parking. This is likely to require a partnership approach.

See also Policy ONG-ED2 which relates specifically to the historic High Street within Chipping Ongar Conservation Area.  
Section 8.4 and Policy ONG-CT3 covers Transport and Movement, including car park provision.

## 6.4 Rationale: Housing Mix and Standards

The district Housing Mix proposed for EFDC is based on the SHMA 2015 and OAHN<sup>18</sup> reports for projected population and is approximately the same as the existing housing mix within the civil parish of Ongar. Maintaining this housing mix in Ongar as the small town and surrounding settlement grows, is important for sustainability and is supported locally. A balanced cohesive community<sup>19</sup>, Chipping Ongar is defined as a Small District Centre by EFDC and is located in the rural NE of the district, approximately 7 miles away from the next nearest town. The present housing mix supports its ‘excellent range of services and facilities’<sup>20</sup>, including good local schools and health care provision. As efforts are made to regenerate the town centre, such a resultant mix of age ranges will enhance the all-round viability and vitality of the parish.

The nature and location of the civil parish of Ongar attracts families to live and enjoy our small country town with its variety of sports and leisure facilities and surrounded by protected countryside. Approximately 70% of Ongar homes are family homes with 3 or more bedrooms (2011 census). Children make up over 1 in 5 of the population and 1 in 8 are over 80<sup>21</sup>. By contrast, ONS statistics also indicate that under 30s are still attracted to city living, and now make up almost 50% of inner city populations<sup>22</sup>. Predicted types of households for 2033 in EFDC indicate an increase in the number of households with dependent children over and above other types of household. Thus maintaining the present housing mix in Ongar will support the predicted demographic changes, both in Ongar in particular and in EFDC generally.



*Bar chart to compare existing Ongar Housing Mix in 2011 with EFDC proposals for 2011-2033<sup>23</sup>*

<sup>18</sup> EB405 Opinion Research Services (ORS) EFDC Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015 and updates EB406

<sup>19</sup> Residents Survey 2018 in evidence file

<sup>20</sup> EB801 ARUP Report on site selection and its Chipping Ongar Town Proforma

<sup>21</sup> The Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2011 states 21.7% of Ongar’s population are children under 18, whilst 12.5% are over 80.

<sup>22</sup> See High Streets Task Force <https://www.highstreettaskforce.org.uk/>

<sup>23</sup> EB405 Opinion Research Services (ORS) for EFDC in Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015 and updates EB406 and Table 4.1 which separates SHMA 2015 Affordable and Market Housing Mix projections



Market forces<sup>24</sup> confirm a high continued demand for family homes in Ongar, especially 3 bed homes with gardens and sufficient car parking provision. House price values are in the region of 20% lower in Ongar than the equivalent in Epping or Loughton<sup>25</sup> and therefore making these more affordable. The coronavirus pandemic of 2020/21 and change in working patterns has reinforced such rural small town appeal.

A 30% increase in the number of homes is planned by 2027 from 2,626 in 2011<sup>26</sup> with the addition of approximately 590 new homes allocated in EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033 and 200 already approved applications or built as windfall sites since 2011<sup>27</sup>. With such a large increase in housing in a short time, particular attention must be given to ensure that all developers complement, and therefore retain, the civil Parish's distinctive and rural character in order to encourage full integration of our new residents into the cohesive community. This is fully supported by the Residents Survey 2018. See also Sustainable Design section 7.5 and Policy ONG-ED4.

Ongar residents typically wish to remain within this parish as they grow older<sup>28</sup>, living independently or in sheltered accommodation. Despite more sheltered accommodation in Ongar recently, there is a demand for bungalows and other single floor flexible living accommodation with gardens, for downsizers<sup>29</sup>. Developers are expected to refer to the DWELL report (2016)<sup>30</sup> and to use its guidance to meet the local demand when considering new development layouts for Ongar. The Essex Design Guide website includes DWELL reports within its guidance for downsizers. Requirements of elderly and disabled, will be expected as part of the housing mix in Ongar.

Chipping Ongar town centre locations are convenient for smaller home and flats, including for retirees. 1 and 2 bed flats<sup>31</sup> are coming forward from conversions of the upper parts of Chipping Ongar High Street premises and brownfield infill sites as windfall sites. Allocated sites ONGR1-8 are mostly edge of settlement sites, which are ideal for larger family homes with gardens and parking and open space within the site.

This will deliver the most efficient use of land in compliance with national guidelines in NPPF 2021. It must also be taken into consideration that all sites ONGR 1-8 are classed<sup>32</sup> as having a High or Very High Sensitivity to Change and High Performance relating to the Green Belt purposes as reported in EFDC site selection documents. A rural ambience must be maintained. See also Section 7 Environment and Design.

EFDC confirmed in 2021 that "when applications are made where the proposed housing mix for a new development deviates from that in the Local Plan, the applicant is required to

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<sup>24</sup> Zoopla & Rightmove and John Sear estate agents

<sup>25</sup> Rightmove & Zoopla June 2021 with between £180k and £220k lower than Epping and Loughton respectively; also reported in EB801 ARUP Site Selection (viability assessment)

<sup>26</sup> EB1118 Infrastructure Delivery Programme update 2021 Part B

<sup>27</sup> EFDC planning approvals since 2011 including 105 in Fyfield Rd and 60 retirement homes.

<sup>28</sup> Residents survey 2018 see evidence file

<sup>29</sup> Residents' Survey 2018 in Evidence File

<sup>30</sup> DWELL (Designing with downsizers University of Sheffield 2016) see evidence file guidance for design and layout of developments to include downsizers. <https://dwell.group.shef.ac.uk/>

<sup>31</sup> EB405 Opinion Research Services (ORS) EFDC in Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015 EB405 and EB406

<sup>32</sup> Land Character and Green Belt Review papers for EFDC for site selection [www.efdclocalplan.org/local-plan/evidence-base/](http://www.efdclocalplan.org/local-plan/evidence-base/)

provide a justification that takes into account both quantitative (evidence based) and qualitative reason.”<sup>33</sup>

The small rural historic town of Chipping Ongar has Right of Ways across surrounding countryside, but has no town park. An existing deficit of semi natural open space and other recreational facilities was defined in 4 Global reports for EFDC. New developments in EFDC’s Local Plan 2011-2033<sup>34</sup> are required contribute to additional infrastructure requirements as detailed in EFDC Infrastructure Delivery Programme<sup>35</sup>. The limited size of the allocated housing sites in Ongar, may require developers to contribute collectively to a more centrally based recreational amenity or facility. See Section Community and Transport Infrastructure, including Policy ONG-CT4 Infrastructure Priorities

Ongar Neighbourhood Plan includes requirement for internal housing space standards to be at least in compliance with the National Standards<sup>36</sup> but expects developers to build more spacious living to take account of the number of people now working from home and Ongar’s rural location. Only applying minimum National standards is not appropriate or intended for a rural parish such as Ongar, where there is more land capacity for homes than inner cities.

Most of Ongar’s surrounding countryside is inaccessible productive farmland. The deficit of open space within the settlement envelopes is confirmed in EFDC reports by 4 Global<sup>37</sup>. Essex Design Guide<sup>38</sup> standards for minimum outside private amenity space must also be complied with for town centre homes but is expected to be greater on the edge of settlement sites. This to be in addition to the space required for off street parking. The continued reliance on private cars is justified in Section 8.4 Transport and Movement and Policy ONG-CT3 includes parking standards. Realistic off street parking provision is therefore required for new homes.

Development of any kind must “relate well to and enhance the existing character and context” (para 64 of National Design Guide 2019). Character at edge of settlement of Ongar is of openness, green verges and views to surrounding countryside. Character and Design are covered in Section 7 of Ongar Neighbourhood Plan, and Ongar Design Guide 2019, which include Place Shaping, layouts, materials etc.

Density of any new housing should be appropriate to the prevailing character of the surrounding neighbourhood within Ongar, whether in our small town centre or on the edge of the Green Belt, the latter requiring additional considerations to comply with the principles of the Green Belt.

EFDC baseline density for the district is 30dph.<sup>39</sup> Paragraph 2.88 of the Local Plan also acknowledges that it is not appropriate to apply density ranges set out in Policy SP3

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<sup>33</sup> See response from EFDC CEO to Alex Burghart MP case no. AB7683 in Evidence file

<sup>34</sup> See evidence file

<sup>35</sup> link to IDP <https://www.efdclocalplan.org/local-plan/evidence-base/>

<sup>36</sup> **‘Technical housing standards – nationally prescribed space standards, March 2015’** minimum sizes range from only 61 sq.m for a 2 bedroomed 1 storey (3 person) accommodation to 84 sqm for a 3bed 2 storey (4 person) and 97 sq.m for 4 bed 2 storey homes (5 person).

<sup>37</sup> 4 Global open space report EB706

<sup>38</sup> Essex Design Guide <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/> which also indicates 100sq.m outside private space for a 3 bedroomed home.

<sup>39</sup> EB801 ARUP Site selection reports

mechanistically but to consider the density appropriate to the location. The average density for the built up parts of Ongar is 24pdh. EFDC site selection reports on the Green Belt and Landscape Sensitivity, conclude sites in Ongar are particularly sensitive to the impact of intensification and development because of the prevailing character of the area and the sensitive nature of the surrounding countryside or built form. Planning applications will be expected to justify the density range, housing mix and parking provision accordingly<sup>40</sup> with evidence.

The National Design Guide supports this in Paragraph 65: *“Built form is determined by good urban design principles that combine layout, form and scale in a way that responds positively to the context. The appropriate density will result from the context, accessibility, the proposed building types, form and character of the development”*.

The concept of ‘efficient use of land’ is not intended to increase the density or height of buildings beyond the prevailing character of the neighbourhood and would misinterpret the NPPF, which is partly intended for the reuse of brownfield sites and prevent urban sprawl in large towns and cities. This is supported by The Minister of State for Housing in June 2021 in response to Ongar’s query. He referred to The NPPF 2021 paragraph 124<sup>41</sup> and Chapter 12 in particular<sup>42</sup> saying that *“Government sets out that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and history and create places which are safe, inclusive and accessible and promote health and well-being.”* Paragraph 125 recommends the application of *“area based character assessments, design guides and codes to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.”* Efficient use of land will also expect developments to have a mix of development and open space. This is explored further in National Design Guide and National Model Design Code.

The Chief Executive of EFDC, in response to a query on Housing Need projections and Housing Mix<sup>43</sup>, reiterated that Market Housing Mix, with over 75% of Market Housing Mix being 3+ bedrooms, is to be supported by the indicative densities (which has a starting point of 30dph<sup>44</sup>) for allocated sites, including all Ongar sites.

To enable local people to stay within the civil parish they grew up in, when setting up home, Housing Association and Community Land Trust groups will be supported. The regulations on these organisations enable more flexibility than many other schemes, of giving priority to

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<sup>40</sup> See evidence file Letter from EFDC Chief Executive to Alex Burghart MP case no. AB7683 in Evidence file Which states the requirement of evidence for any deviation from housing mix

<sup>41</sup> NPPF Para 122 Paragraph 122 stating that development should also recognise *“that provision of housing, habitat creation, public access to the countryside, flood risk mitigation are among many of the efficient uses of land”* and that *“identified need for different types of housing, the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places”* needs to be taken into account in local Policies.

<sup>42</sup> Extract from letter from Minister of State for Housing, June 2021 *“The NPPF should be read as a whole”...“which emphasise the importance of sustainable, well-designed development which supports strong, vibrant and healthy communities. In particular, the Government supports the creation of high-quality buildings and places. In Chapter 12 the Government sets out that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and history and create places which are safe, inclusive and accessible and promote health and well-being.”* See evidence file for the letter from Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP 2021

<sup>43</sup> See evidence file for response to case ref AB17683 relating to the District Housing Mix

<sup>44</sup> See EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033 evidence base for site selection (external reports) EB800-805 <https://www.efdclocalplan.org/local-plan/evidence-base>

those with a link to Ongar, to benefit from low cost market homes remaining at an affordable price for future eligible households in perpetuity.

Better social integration of residents of affordable and market housing is achieved by integrating homes within a development, rather than building only affordable homes in one section. Different tenures should also be indistinguishable (tenure blind).

## **Policy ONG-RR3: Housing Mix and Standards**

### **Policy ONG-RR3: Housing Mix and Standards**

- 1. The mix of accommodation in newbuild residential development must reflect the latest evidence of local need in the civil parish of Ongar to meet the requirements of all parts of the community, including:**
  - a) Larger accommodation (3-4 bedrooms) suitable for families;**
  - b) Smaller accommodation (1-2 bedrooms) suitable for first time buyers and those seeking to downsize;**
  - c) Accommodation suitable for older people and people of limited mobility.**
  
- 2. The mix, density and character of housing should complement the local context and wider existing area, including:**
  - a) Higher density and smaller accommodation close to the Town Centre;**
  - b) Lower density and larger accommodation with front and rear gardens, at edge of settlement and in the more rural parts of the civil parish.**
  
- 3. New dwellings must comply with the ‘technical standards – nationally described space standards March 2015’ or any standard revoking and replacing that document.**
  
- 4. Any affordable housing requirement should be provided as an integral part of each development and be tenure blind.**
  
- 5. Community-led, self-build and high environmental performance housing are encouraged.**

## Interpretation of ONG-RR3

The policy emphasises the importance of new housing being in character with the rural parish and maintaining our balanced community. See also Policies on Local Character and Design ONG-ED1, Sustainable Design ONG-ED4 and Policy Transport and Movement ONG-CT3, which includes parking provision.

The housing mix, based on evidence for EFDC (SHMA 2015) generally and Ongar civil parish in particular (ONS 2011), includes the need to provide a range of properties to enable growing families to stay in the Civil Parish as their housing needs change over time, thus being able to remain living within the cohesive community over many years.

Planning applications must justify the mix of new homes to be provided in compliance with this Ongar Neighbourhood plan Policy ONG-RR3 and EFDC Policy H1 part B. To demonstrate compliance with the policy, developers should explain how the mix reflects evidence of need locally in the parish including family homes and downsizers. Any application that “deviates from that in the Local Plan” must justify with “both quantitative (evidence based) and qualitative reasons.”<sup>45</sup>. National Design Guide 2019 guidelines relating to local context and character must be applied when considering any National Standards. Windfall sites and brownfield development and conversions will be more suitable for smaller accommodation and flats enabling a balance to be reset elsewhere in the parish in favour of family homes.

Density must equate with the prevailing density of approx. 24dph in the built up parts of Ongar. EFDC district wide base density is 30dph<sup>46</sup>. If the density is too high, the danger is that the housing mix cannot be met, and cramming encroaches on internal and private amenity space with harmful well-being and social effects<sup>47</sup> as well as the resulting development being out of character with its neighbourhood.

For Car parking provision See ONG-CT3<sup>48</sup>.

The policy refers to nationally described space standards for housing, but compliance with the DWELL standard is also encouraged.

Garden space requirements are set out in the Essex Design Guide, but should relate to the local character, which may indicate larger or small gardens; and sensitive locations within Conservation Areas. Design and character requirements are dealt with by policies in the Environment and Design part of this Neighbourhood Plan.

Tenure blind means that the affordable housing is indistinguishable from the market housing.

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<sup>45</sup> See Evidence File Response from EFDC Chief Executive relating to Housing Mix in Ongar to Alex Burghart MP case no.AB17683

<sup>46</sup> EFDC Site Selection Reports EB800-805 <https://www.efdclocalplan.org/local-plan/evidence-base/>

<sup>47</sup> See NPPF 2021 paragraph 8 relating to economic, social and environment objectives of Sustainable development

<sup>48</sup> see section 8.4 Transport and Movement for justification of Policy ONG CT3

## 6.5 Rationale: Broadband

With the growth in home working, a fast and reliable internet connection will be vital. Most of Ongar is on existing plans for broadband development

NPPF at Paragraph 114 requires advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure for economic growth and social well-being. Planning applications should include full fibre connections to existing and all new developments, including conversions.

### Policy ONG-RR4: Broadband

#### Policy ONG-RR4: Broadband

**All new dwellings must incorporate high-speed broadband connections within the site, so as to be ready as and when local services are upgraded.**

### Interpretation of ONG-RR4

The policy requires high-speed infrastructure to be provided within development sites, to include all new dwellings including conversions and change of use to residential, so as to be ready as local service provision is improved, including 4G, and 5G and any future upgrades.

# Environment and Design

## 7.1 Purposes

The purposes of the policies in this section are:

- Ensuring a place-making approach to development, to ensure that it is sustainable, well-designed and creates a distinctive local identity.
- Protecting or enhancing the historic, natural and rural environments of the civil parish of Ongar.
- Protecting the existing unique character of the built form including overall layout and design, vernacular style, local materials, architectural details etc. as defined in Ongar Design Guide 2019 (AECOM)

The policies in this chapter and in conjunction with all the policies on Rural Regeneration and Community and Transport Infrastructure need to be read and applied collectively.

## 7.2 Rationale: Local Character and Design

Design for any new development in Ongar should start with an appreciation of the existing local character.<sup>49</sup> New developments will be expected to complement and enhance local character to provide well designed places where cars do not dominate the street scene.<sup>50</sup>

The character of the civil parish of Ongar is primarily defined by its historic core of Chipping Ongar High Street. Of medieval origin, the town enclosure is situated on a ridge with glimpses to the surrounding open, sparsely populated countryside. Mostly unchanged, Chipping Ongar and its neighbouring settlements of Marden Ash and Shelley experienced some 20<sup>th</sup> century development which largely respected the rural nature of the parish with low rise homes, wide grass verges, many being tree lined and open views to the countryside.

*These historic buildings are an essential part of the character of Ongar and were mentioned in the Conservation Area Appraisal in 1998.*

Overall layout and design, vernacular style and materials as well as architectural details used over the centuries determines local character. Protecting that unique character as a small historic town in an open rural setting is particularly important to the community. Any new development must apply the guidelines in Ongar Design Guide 2019<sup>51</sup> together with the National Design Guide 2021, and National Model Design Code 2021 in their detailed planning, as well as information in Essex Design Guide. This is especially important because EFDC Local Plan includes an increase in housing stock for Ongar, by up to a third in a short space of time

The Character of today's Civil Parish of Ongar is still rural in nature and defined by low rise, low density, with an openness, green verges and views of the surrounding countryside in all residential parts of the civil parish. The town centre of Chipping Ongar has a more enclosed built-up character<sup>52</sup>, although still only 2 or 3 storey buildings, depending largely on their historic importance. It retains glimpses to open countryside emphasising its rural location. Chipping Ongar was an important market town as long ago as the Medieval era, the administrative centre of the Saxon Ongar Hundred, and has the remains of a Norman motte and bailey castle surrounded by countryside

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<sup>49</sup> See Evidence File Ongar Design Guide AECOM 2019

<sup>50</sup> See National Design Guide 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>  
National Model Design Code 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code>

<sup>51</sup> AECOM Ongar Design Guide 2019 see evidence file

<sup>52</sup> EFDC Chipping Ongar Conservation Area leaflet 1998 see evidence file





The varied architectural styles in the civil parish of Ongar reflects its gradual development since Medieval times to the present day and includes Georgian and Queen Anne Mansions, thatched cottages, typical 18th century workers' cottages and more ornate artisan, timber framed and brick-built dwellings. The railway service to London opened in 1865 and brought a variety of public Victorian buildings, including a police station (now demolished), and Budworth Hall.

Ongar Design Guide (AECOM 2019) sets out the positive aspects of character for different parts of the parish and gives clear guidelines for a general approach to layout and other built elements that apply to all character areas. It also sets out the design and detail that is typical of each part of the Civil Parish, including its two Conservation Areas and other Heritage Assets. All these factors contribute to the local unique character of the area and is valued by the local community. Ongar Design Guide includes: Townscape structure; Green spaces; Public realm and streetscape; Pattern and layout of buildings; Building line and boundary treatments; Views and landmarks; Building heights and roofline; Building modifications, extension and plot infill; Architectural details; and Materials. The National Design Guide rev. ed. 2021 emphasises the need to relate local vernacular, including the type of layout according to rural and edge of settlement design. (EFDC allocated sites for Ongar fall into the "edge of settlement" and "town centre" designs p19) Essex Design Guide reiterates this.

The elements in the National Design Guide 2021 and the National Model Design Code 2021<sup>53</sup> supports the content of Ongar Design Guide and quotes "Good design involves careful attention to other important components of places [in addition to buildings]. These include:

- The context for places and buildings;
- Hard and soft landscape;
- Technical infrastructures, transport, utilities, services such as drainage; and
- Social infrastructure-social, commercial, leisure uses and activities."

Those 'important components' include: layout, form and scale, appearance, landscape, materials and detailing. Ongar Design Guide specifies these in relation to local context, with particular characteristics and design requirements of the civil parish of Ongar to be followed. "When considering the layout, grain and scale of the buildings and spaces in different locations, traditional street patterns help create new developments that fit well into the surrounding context" rather than a bolt on addition. Furthermore, National Design Guide p19 has diagrams for 'centre' and 'edge' which apply to Ongar and should be used. Local context and good design should lead to the best use of land, including density. Paragraphs 64, 65, and 66 of National Design Guide state:

*"64 Well-designed new development makes efficient use of land with an amount and mix of development and open space that optimises density. It also relates well to and enhances the existing character and context.*

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<sup>53</sup> National Design Guide 2021 MHCLG <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>  
National Model Design Code 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code>

*65 Built form is determined by good urban design principles that combine layout, form and scale in a way that responds positively to the context. The appropriate density will result from the context, accessibility, the proposed building types, form and character of the development.*

*66 Well-designed places also use the right mix of building types, forms and scale of buildings and public spaces to create a coherent form of development that people enjoy. They also adopt strategies for parking and amenity that support the overall quality of the place. “*

Efficient use of land is also covered in the NPPF 2021 Paragraph 124 stating that development should also recognise “*that provision of housing, habitat creation, public access to the countryside, flood risk mitigation are among many of the efficient uses of land*” and that “*identified need for different types of housing, the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places*” needs to be taken into account in local Policies. Paragraph 120 also states that policies and decisions should only support upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene.

Community engagement confirmed that local people appreciate the rural landscape, with over 90% of the Residents Survey respondents<sup>54</sup> wanting to maintain the rural setting, provide additional trees and green corridors and protect the natural environment. The latter is covered in Section 7.6 The Natural Environment to achieve these aspirations.

Good design, which complies with Government thinking, Frameworks, Guidance and Reports<sup>55</sup> will lead to “Neighbourhoods create places not just houses”. Living with Beauty 2020 recognises that the model of development from ‘building units’ needs to change to ‘making places’. This will ensure that place shaping within developments will lead from good layouts in appropriate design, open spaces, private amenity space, natural surveillance, recreational areas etc. and neighbourhoods with street scenes not dominated by cars. This in turn leads to efficient use of land.

For Ongar’s allocated sites, it is expected that the place shaping principles will be the starting point. Considerations of the local character and context, constraints of the site, the character of the location (e.g. open rural edge of settlement or town centre enclosed), housing mix requirements and community spaces or facilities on the site will determine the eventual numbers of homes and appropriate density. Although EFDC Local Plan does give approximate housing numbers for the Strategic Sites ONG R1-ONG R8, final numbers can only be determined after justification in applying these other factors, as per Paragraph 65 of National Design Guide During EFDC’s examination process, The Inspector<sup>56</sup> acknowledged

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<sup>54</sup> Residents Survey 2018 see evidence file

<sup>55</sup>Including NPPF <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework—2> National Design Guide 2021<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide> National Model Design Code 2021<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code> Planning for the Future 2020 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/872091/Planning\\_for\\_the\\_Future.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/872091/Planning_for_the_Future.pdf) <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future> Living with Beauty 2020<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/living-with-beauty-report-of-the-building-better-building-beautiful-commission> , Housing Design Audit for England 2020 <https://indd.adobe.com/view/23366ae1-8f97-455d-896a-1a9934689cd8>

<sup>56</sup> EFDC Local Plan Hearing Sessions records <https://www.efdclocalplan.org/local-plan/hearing-sessions/> , 2019 of EFDC Local Plan submission version, where the wording of minimum indicative Housing numbers could apply

that numbers on most strategic sites must be flexible because many sites still had to have more accurate assessment of physical, ecological and environment constraints. Rigidity on numbers must not predetermine the design of the site which could lead to inappropriate character, housing mix, density, massing, open green space, etc. Mistakes of the past must be avoided. See also Section 6.4 Housing Mix and Standards and Policy ONG-RR3 and EFDC statement on Housing Mix and densities for Ongar sites<sup>57</sup>

Landscaping with trees and hedging will be expected and existing trees should be retained. Where tree loss is unavoidable, such as through disease, replacement trees must be provided elsewhere on the site. New planting will be expected to use indigenous species which support insect life and native animal food chains. See also Section 7.6 Natural Environment and Policy ONG-ED5

'Passive' housing and other design and materials supporting green issues and carbon reduction is encouraged.

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to MasterPlans, but only approximate housing numbers for other allocated sites. Representations had queried the accuracy and depth of analysis of some of the allocated sites. (verifiable by attendees and recordings).

<sup>57</sup> See evidence file for response by EFDC Chief executive to Alex Burghart MP case ref AB17683 relating to the District Housing Mix

**Policy ONG-ED1: Local Character and Design**

**Policy ONG-ED1: Local Character and Design**

1. **New-build development, including extensions, and alterations to existing dwellings must complement the rural character of the Ongar Parish and the specific character of the immediate context, creating a locally distinctive sense of place. This includes:**
  - a) **Complementing the existing rural ‘townscape’ character in terms of height, scale, massing, and degree of set-back of building frontages from the road in accordance as to whether the development is in the town centre of Chipping Ongar, infill of the built up area, edge of settlement of the surrounding rural villages and hamlets of Shelley, Marden Ash and Greensted or in the countryside ;**
  - b) **Using high quality and durable materials, with a high standard of finish, with locally indigenous materials, in particular, being welcomed;**
  - c) **Retaining existing trees and hedges, as well as including new planting, including in the street scene, using native local species;**
  - d) **Using hedges or low-level (1 metre or less) masonry walls constructed of local materials for front boundary treatments;**
  - e) **Using landscape buffers with open glimpses to the surrounding countryside, to create a soft transition for development on the edge of the rural area;**
  - f) **Incorporating views and glimpses to surrounding countryside in layout and form of development.**
  
2. **Innovative and creative design solutions designed for the specific site and context will be welcomed, especially where they incorporate superior environmental performance.**

## Interpretation of ONG-ED1

This should be considered particularly with Policy ONG-RR3 Housing Mix and Standards, which includes density, Policy ONG-ED4 Sustainable Design, and Policy ONG-DT3 Transport and Movement which includes parking provision, as well as the other design and environment policies in this Chapter .

Policy ONG-ED1 aims to promote high quality buildings that complement the existing townscape characteristics of the area, using place shaping principles and appropriate layout, scale and grain, and to include open spaces within new developments. Details within Ongar Design Guide<sup>58</sup> and relevant sections of the National Design Guide 2019<sup>59</sup>, National Model Design Code 2021 and Essex Design Guide should be applied. Specifically, there should be a move away from car dominated streets in residential areas, with better solutions for car parking and cycle provision using Essex Design Guide and Essex Parking Standards 2009. Car parking policy is covered in Transport and Movement and Policy CT3

The policy is not intended to suppress creativity or to require stylistic imitation. The design of new buildings should reflect the design trends and principles of their time, so that the rich diversity of local character continues and is extended into the future. Indeed, the new buildings most likely to be perceived as heritage in the future would be likely to be the more creative and innovative examples.

To allow for proper consideration of development proposals, new buildings and extensions should be shown on plans relative to existing buildings, including 3D visuals. The design and access statement and, where applicable, heritage statement provide opportunities to explain how the requirements of the policy have been complied with including from Ongar Design Guide and the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code.

See also Section 7.6 Natural Environment and Policy ONG-ED5 relating to trees and vegetation within new developments and Section 7.7 rationale Landscape Buffers and Policy ONG-ED6

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<sup>58</sup> Ongar Design Guide (AECOM) 2019 See evidence file

<sup>59</sup> National Design Guide 2019 <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/>

### 7.3 Rationale: Design and Character in the Chipping Ongar Conservation Area

Chipping Ongar Conservation Area covers the medieval town enclosure with Ongar Castle, St Martin's Church, the High Street and immediate environs from Ongar Bridge in the south to Central House and Hermitage Cottage to the north. The definition of streets and spaces, public and private realm, are very distinct in the central part of Chipping Ongar with a clear sense of enclosure along a widened main street of a type found in many English market towns originating during the Saxon period. The character of the High Street derives from strong building lines, the gentle curvature of the street offering a series of attractive vistas, 'pinch point' buildings marking entry and exit points to the former town enclosure, views into the surrounding countryside and prominent public buildings which form local landmarks.

The form and layout of the historic core of Chipping Ongar has changed little since the medieval period, although a small residential estate was built behind the United Reform Church via Stanley Place in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century with a sympathetic layout. A weekly market started in the 12th century and the marketplace is still apparent at the widest part of the High Street between the Kings Head and Wren House.

Ongar Neighbourhood Plan aims to deliver enhancements to the character of the settlement through policies in this section, in conjunction with an understanding of the localised area. The Essex Design Guide<sup>60</sup>, the National Design Guide 2021 and National Model Design Code 2021 include a variety of types of community such as town centre, urban, suburban and rural edge of settlement locations Ongar Design Guide provides the local detail.

Chipping Ongar High Street is also the centre of the Conservation Area. Chipping Ongar was one of the first Conservation Areas to be designated by Essex County Council in January 1969 and contains over 100 listed buildings and other structures. 94% of respondents to the Residents Survey<sup>61</sup> considered that the historic town centre adds character and 80% wanted a policy to protect listed buildings and their settings from inappropriate development. Ongar Design Guide 2019 complements Chipping Ongar Conservation Area Appraisal<sup>62</sup>. The latter gives details of the character and design that is typical of each part of the Conservation Area, including High Street, backlands, Castle environs and residential developments. Ongar Design Guide covers all of the Civil Parish, including its conservation areas and other heritage assets. Ongar Design Guide provides additional guidance on architectural details, materials, boundary treatment, roofscapes etc. for any development and extensions on Listed buildings, and also all buildings within Conservation Areas of Ongar.

Even if a building is not itself listed as a Designated Heritage Asset, as defined in the NPPF, it may be within the 'Setting' of a Listed Building or group of Listed buildings. Particular attention will therefore need to be made to any change that requires planning approval or certificate, in order not to harm a Listed Building directly or to harm the Setting as well as to protect the provenance. Whilst it is important to ensure that listed buildings can provide a function suitable for today's needs, it is also important to retain the features for future

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<sup>60</sup> The Essex Design Guide is an on line guide <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk> [Home | Essex Design Guide](#)

<sup>61</sup> Residents Survey 2018 see evidence file

<sup>62</sup> EFDC Chipping Ongar Conservation Area Appraisal 1998 by Maria Medlycott see evidence file

<https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/chpping-ongar-conservation-area.pdf>

generations. Thus, only sympathetic materials will be expected to be used in alterations and extensions. In addition, should partitions of rooms for example, be required to suit today's purposes, such building works must not harm features such as covings, architraves.

There is strong support in Ongar, as confirmed in the Residents Survey 2018, for enhancement of the historic High Street, including with changes to shop windows and upper parts fenestration or other detail to revert to the character of the original building. Shop signage should also reflect the High Street being a Conservation area with traditional fascias, signage and external lighting. Neon lighting and external metal roller shutters and grilles are out of character and will be refused permission. Shutters and grilles must be behind the shop window and integrated into the design. Furthermore solid shutters, grilles etc. have a deadening effect on the street scene, so will also be refused permission. Laminated glass and internal chain-link screens are likely to be more appropriate alternatives in most instances<sup>63</sup>. Ongar Design Guide 2019 (AECOM) should be used as well as relevant sections of the National Design Guide and National Model design Code 2021.

There is also detail within the Actions and Projects Appendix<sup>64</sup> of ideas for Regeneration of the High Street, including appearance to reflect its historic heritage, as well as enabling a more diverse usage to re-establish the community hub and vibrant local economy, linking with tourism and the visitor economy.

In the early 1960s, some old buildings were replaced with modern buildings. Any future demolitions and redevelopment must respect the status of the High Street as a Conservation Area with mainly 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century architecture. The relative heights of roofs and number of storeys reflects the relative importance of the building. Narrow low rise buildings should not be able to have additional storeys where their relative importance in the High Street will then conflict with its new height. The trend for basement development must include stringent conditions to ensure that the integrity of the building and nearby buildings is not compromised, and that this is not in any location subject to underground springs.<sup>65</sup>

Any changes must also ensure that refuse bins can be hidden from the view in the public realm. Additional parking provision and charging points will be expected for conversions to residential, including upper storeys and mews developments in the backlands/old coaching yards, which could include undercroft parking. Secure cycle storage must also be provided.<sup>66</sup>

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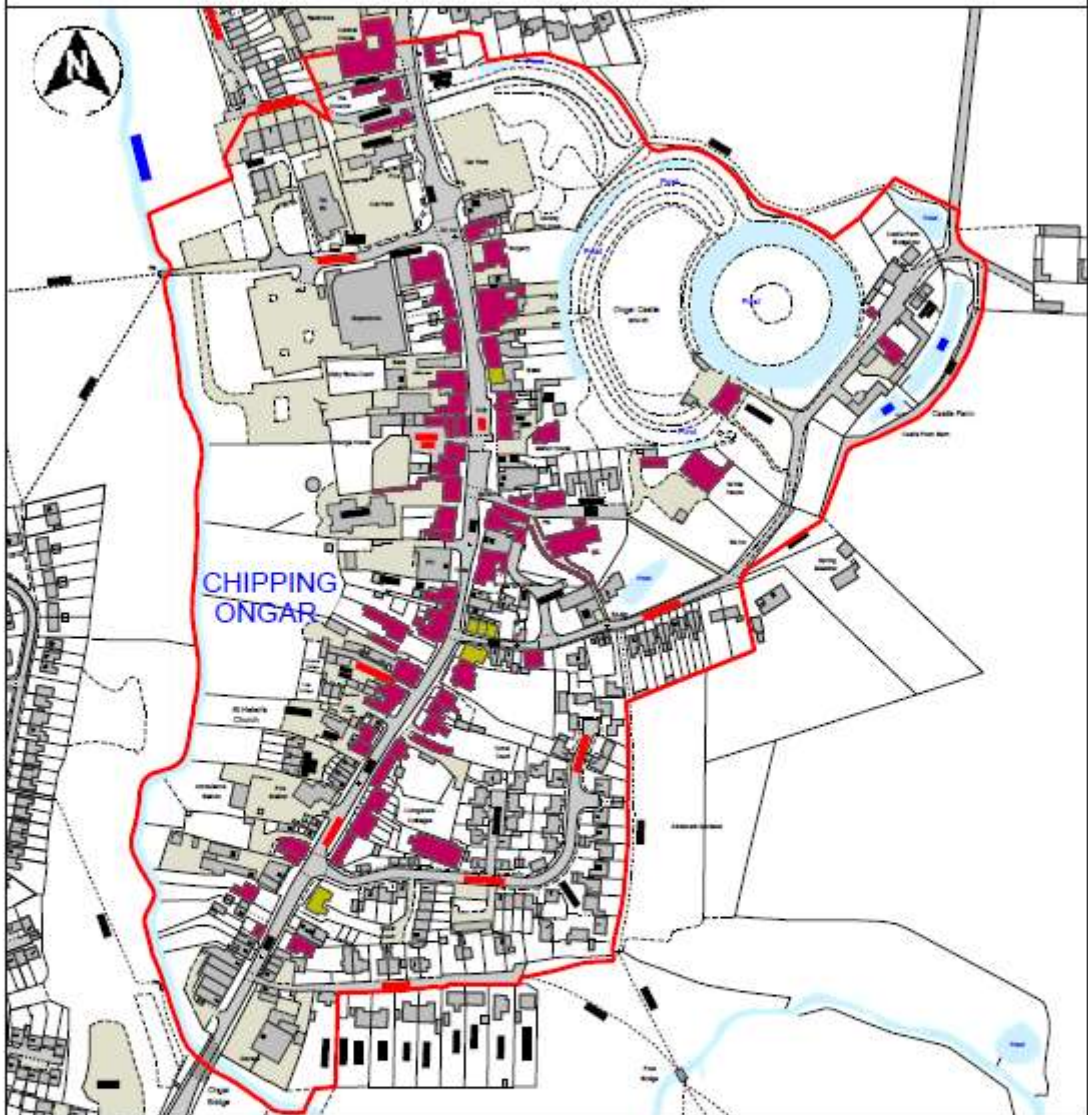
<sup>63</sup> See Historic England Making Changes to Historic Assets Advice Note 2  
<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/making-changes-heritage-assets-advice-note-2/>

<sup>64</sup> Projects and Actions is an Appendix to the Ongar Neighbourhood Plan

<sup>65</sup> See Natural Environment section 7.6 and Policy ONG-ED5

<sup>66</sup> See Section 8.4 Transport and Movement and Policy ONG-CT3

# CHIPPING ONGAR CONSERVATION AREA



## LEGEND

- Conservation Area Boundary
- Statutory Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings

Contains Ordnance Survey & Royal Mail Data  
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Civic Offices  
 High Street  
 Epping, Essex,  
 CM16 4BZ  
 Tel: 01992 564000



Date: 15/04/2015

Scale: 1:4926  
 @ A4

Drawn By: EFDC  
 Conservation Team



**Policy ONG-ED2: Design and character in the Chipping Ongar Conservation Area**

**Policy ONG-ED2: Design and Character in the Chipping Ongar Conservation Area**

1. In addition to meeting the requirements of Policy ONG-ED1, within the Chipping Ongar Conservation Area, development must complement the following historic characteristics:
  - a) Frontages directly onto the rear of pavement, or set back behind shallow front courts;
  - b) The predominant 2-3 storey height of properties;
  - c) The architectural diversity of the area;
  - d) Uncluttered public realm with discrete positions for Refuse Bins out of public view.
  
2. The reinstatement of historic shopfronts will be supported. New shopfronts must complement the historic character of the building and area, including:
  - a) Using authentic traditional materials, including timber, render, glass, painted metal. Use of plastics and other synthetic materials would not normally preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.
  - b) Incorporating traditional features, including fascia, pilasters, raised windows above stall risers and recessed or flush doorways.
  - c) Incorporating space for signage within the fascia, so that signage does not obscure the features of the shopfront or building frontage.
  - d) Ensuring that any shutters, grilles or other security features are integrated into the design, behind the shop window and must not be solid in appearance.
  
3. Contemporary shopfronts will only be considered where they demonstrate exceptional standards of design and utilise very high-quality materials, so as to add to the architectural interest of the building and area.

## Interpretation of ONG-ED2

The Policy focuses on the specific character of the Conservation Area and in particular the High Street. This Policy should be applied to all buildings including shops, offices and residences together with other design policies and Ongar Design Guide. Ongar Design Guide and EFDC Chipping Ongar Conservation Area Appraisal 1998 are useful in giving examples of the diverse types of architecture in keeping with the Conservation Area.

In addition, Historic England can give advice on complying with requirements for Listed Building Consent to and alterations or reinstatement/restoration of historic assets and have several useful publications<sup>67</sup>. The use of very high quality design and materials will be expected throughout all work.

As with Policy ONG-ED1, the aim of ONG-ED2 is not to suppress creativity or to require stylistic imitation. Indeed, this would be at odds with understanding the character of the Conservation Area, with its architecturally diverse character.

Traditional shop front signage includes the font and lighting

To allow for proper consideration of development proposals, new buildings and extensions should be shown on plans relative to existing buildings, including 3D visuals. The design and access statement and, where applicable, heritage statement provide opportunities to explain how the requirements of the policy have been complied with including from Ongar Design Guide and the National Design Guide. Historic England has several guidance documents as well as Streets for All and Manual for Streets<sup>68</sup>

Policies in the Community and Transport section such as Transport and Movement CT3 and Rural Regeneration including RR2 Chipping Ongar High Street should also be considered and applied in any development within Chipping Ongar Conservation Area

See also Historic Buildings 7.4 and Policy ONG-ED3 and Section 6.3 Chipping Ongar High Street and Policy ONG-RR2

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<sup>67</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/making-changes-heritage-assets-advice-note-2/>

<sup>68</sup> Streets for All <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/streets-for-all/>

and Manual for Streets

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/341513/pdfmanforstreets.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/341513/pdfmanforstreets.pdf) Manual for Streets 2 <https://tsrgd.co.uk/pdf/mfs/mfs2.pdf>

## 7.4 Rationale: Historic Buildings

The strong historic character is arguably the Ongar Civil Parish's most important asset. Historic character is mainly concentrated in the Chipping Ongar Conservation Area.

The types of historic asset to which this Section applies are 'Designated Historic Assets': i.e. national and locally Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas as described in the NPPF<sup>69</sup>

The civil Parish of Ongar has a rich heritage. There are two Conservation Areas, an Ancient Monument, several Grade I and Grade II\* buildings and over 100 Grade II Listed buildings and a number of Locally Listed Buildings. The railway is now a Heritage Railway.



*An attractive row of traditional buildings in the High Street*

Chipping Ongar includes the Ancient Monument of Ongar Motte and Bailey Castle and Medieval Town Enclosure. Most of the Listed buildings lie within Chipping Ongar Conservation Area centred round the Medieval town enclosure and High Street with the remainder in the outlying settlements of Greensted, Marden Ash and Shelley. The oldest wooden church in the world is St Andrews at Greensted and is part of the Church and Manorial Hall complex at Greensted with a Group Listing.

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<sup>69</sup> These lists are available through EFDC website  
<https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/planning-and-building/built-heritage/listed-buildings/#:~:text=There%20are%20over%201%2C300%20listed%20buildings%20in%20the,such%20as%20village%20pumps%2C%20bridges%20or%20telephone%20kiosks.>

Great Stony Conservation Area conserves the architectural layout of previous school and residential buildings round a circular green. The major feature is the symmetry of adjacent buildings and care must be taken when considering extensions to individual homes and how this may unbalance the symmetry. An Article 4 Direction to prevent Permitted Development Rights is recommended of the local planning authority.



**Greensted Church**



*The inner bailey (top right) and moat and motte (top left) of Ongar Castle are three of Ongar's hidden historic monuments.*

*Work in the Action Plan aims to open these up to more visitors.*

A number of newer 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings, especially 1960s builds in the town, just prior to the conservation status, have had a detrimental effect on the quality and setting of Designated Heritage Assets and the Chipping Ongar Conservation Areas generally, as noted in the Chipping Ongar Conservation Area Appraisal 1998<sup>70</sup>. Ongar Neighbourhood Plan policies

<sup>70</sup> EFDC Chipping Ongar Conservation Area Appraisal 1998 see evidence file <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/chpping-ongar-conservation-area.pdf>

aim to ensure that further infill development is in keeping with the character of the surroundings and does not detract from the Setting or function of Listed Buildings. This is supported by a number of national initiatives, Planning Policy frameworks and reports including:

- Paragraph 190 of the NPPF 2021 endeavours to sustain and enhance the historic environment to bring social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits and improvements to local character and distinctiveness.
- Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission Interim Report July 2019<sup>71</sup> – Section 9.3 Access to Nature, and BBB Report January 2020.
- National Design Guide, MHCLG, October 2019 & rev ed. 2021; and National Model Design Code 2021
- Planning practice guidance, MHCLG, 2016

Designated Heritage Assets are protected through the NPPF and in EFDC emerging Local Plan Policy DM7.

EFDC emerging Local Plan's Approach to Heritage Assets Paragraphs 4.58 to 4.64 supports the NPPF and requires in: -

4.59 that the "Council will take periodic reviews of its designated and non-designated heritage assets and introduce additional levels of protection, such as through the use of Article 4 Directions" ...." where justified."

4.60 "A heritage statement is required" to cover several aspects.

Ongar Neighbourhood Plan policies go further by appreciating that the historic character of a place is the group of qualities derived from its past uses that make it distinctive. Thus, in considering any new developments, extensions or changes to exterior of buildings, it must ensure that heritage assets and their settings are protected or enhanced. This may include: visual aspects, architectural features, materials, and spaces associated with its history, including its original configuration and subsequent losses and changes.

'Setting' is separate from the concepts of curtilage, character and context and frequently misunderstood. The NPPF makes it clear that the extent of the setting of a heritage asset "is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve" In a townscape, 'setting' will include space in the vicinity of the heritage asset and its purpose. In the context of Chipping Ongar, careful consideration of 'setting' must be including in any proposal to change the space, such as developing within old coaching inns' stable yards or workshop areas. In the Great Stony Park Conservation Area, that includes extensions and conversions that destroy the symmetry.

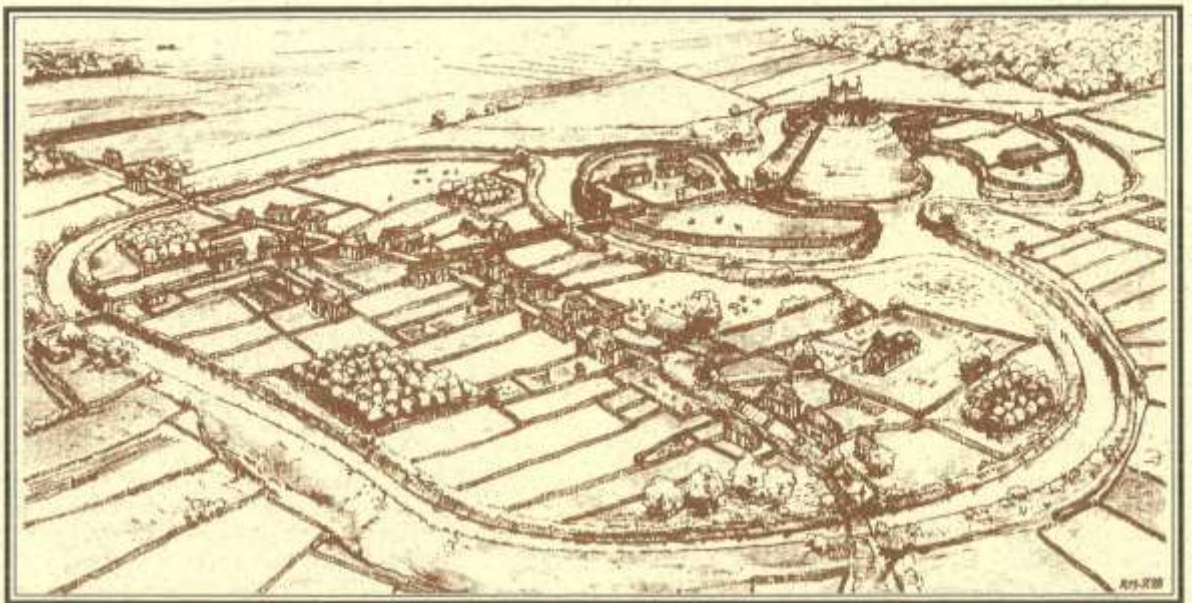
Even if a building is not itself listed as a Designated Heritage Asset, as defined in the NPPF, it may be *within* the 'Setting' of a Listed Building or group of Listed buildings. Particular attention will therefore need to be made to any change that requires planning approval or certificate, in order not to harm a Listed Building directly or to harm the Setting, as well as to protect the provenance.

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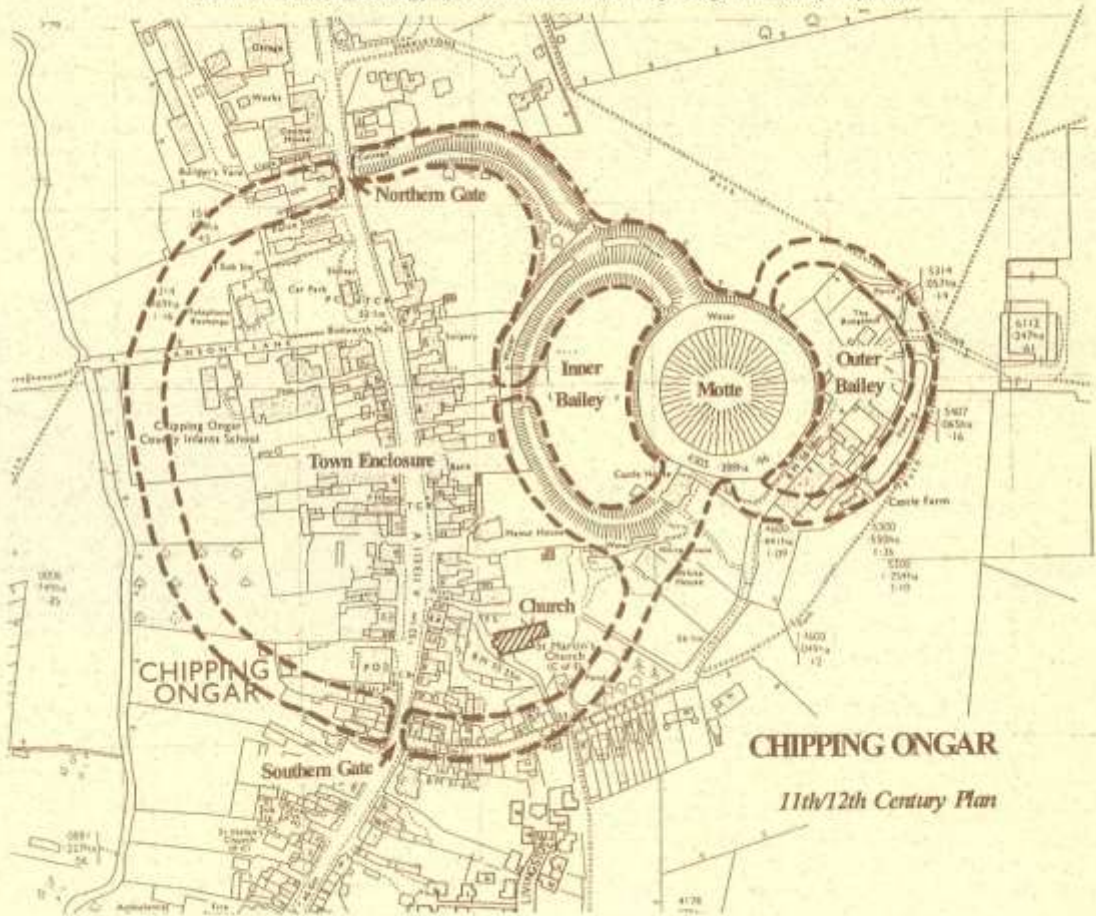
<sup>71</sup> Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission Interim Report July 2019  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/living-with-beauty-report-of-the-building-better-building-beautiful-commission>

Whilst it is important to ensure that listed buildings can provide a function suitable for today's needs, it is also important to retain the features for future generations. Thus, only sympathetic materials will be expected to be used in alterations and extensions.

Similarly, trends change in demand for different uses and sizes of rooms. Should partitions of rooms for example, be required to suit today's purposes, such building works must not harm features such as covings or architraves. This can be achieved by ensuring partitions etc butt up to and go round such features, instead of cutting into them. In order to be able to enjoy historic buildings today, enabling reversible alterations will ensure that future generations will also still be able to benefit from those buildings, even as trends inevitably change again for how buildings can be used. In building construction terms, this is a workable requirement. This would enable Paragraph 189 of NPPF 2021 to be applied to the benefit of Ongar, recognising that our Heritage Assets *"are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for the contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations"*. The desirability is for buildings to be used rather than to be left unoccupied and become in disrepair



An artist's impression of the 11th century town with its new defences. (Reproduced courtesy of Essex County Council's Archaeology Section and drawn by Roger Massey-Ryan).



This plan shows the location of the original town defences in relation to modern day Chipping Ongar.

**Policy ONG-ED3: Historic Buildings**

- Policy ONG-ED3: Historic Buildings**
1. **The reinstatement of historic buildings (listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas) to a more original state, based on evidence, will be supported, unless the previous alterations contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of the building or area.**
  2. **Extensions to listed buildings must be subservient in scale, height and positioning and avoid obliterating features which contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of the building or harming its Setting.**
  3. **Alterations to listed buildings, including sub-division, should be reversible and be designed and positioned to minimise impact on historic fabric.**
  4. **Development affecting the setting of listed buildings must preserve or enhance that setting, including complementing the existing townscape character, in accordance with Policies ONG-ED1 and ONG-ED2. Development will not be supported where it would compromise historic spaces within the setting of a listed building, including historic enclosed yard spaces.**
  5. **Development in conservation areas must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area, including complementing the existing townscape character, in accordance with Policies ONG-ED1 and ONG-ED2.**
  6. **New buildings and extensions involving listed buildings and their Setting or Conservation Areas must demonstrate a high standard of detail and finish, including constructional detail and degree of recession of openings. Where plans contain insufficient detail to demonstrate a high standard of detail and finish, more detail must be requested and received before a decision is made.**



## **Interpretation of ONG-ED3**

The policy adds some detail to national and Local Plan policies to guide the alteration and extension of historic buildings. It also guides the application of the special statutory duties for Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

It is recommended that Historic England publications including Making Changes to Heritage Assets Advice Note 2 are referred to. In addition Designated Heritage Assets will need to meet requirements for Listed Buildings Consent. Historic England also provides advice. In the case of extensions, use of light-weight construction with extensive use of glass can be a way of minimising the impact on historic fabric.

The requirement for alterations to be reversible means that new insertions should avoid cutting into historic fabric. For example, a new wall to sub-divide a room should be contoured to fit around moulding, rather than cutting through those mouldings.

A high standard of detail and finish is expected, including for example to window recesses. Thus complete construction details will be expected, conveying accurate information of a specific nature, with a planning application. Comprehensive details can be shown on large-scale drawings and cross sections of the parts, such as window recesses. Constructional detail requires specifications of detail of the finished design. This is essential to gain a fuller, more precise understanding of the work to be carried out.

To allow for proper consideration of development proposals, new buildings and extensions should be shown on plans relative to existing buildings, including 3D visuals. The design and access statement and, where applicable, Heritage statement provide opportunities to explain how the requirements of the Policy have been complied with, including drawing material from Ongar Design Guide, the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and Heritage England's documents.

## 7.5 Rationale: Sustainable Design

Sustainable design will ‘create better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities’ NPPF 2021<sup>72</sup>. Design will involve meeting the needs of future generations without compromising the needs of present populations. The three overlapping objectives<sup>73</sup> are:

- economic-providing sufficient land in the right place;
- social- to support inclusive safe environments and open spaces for health, social and cultural well-being, without overcrowding;
- environmental- by protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environments, minimising waste and pollution and adapting to climate change.

An emphasis on place shaping principles is expected.<sup>74</sup> New development should relate to the existing character and ‘context’ of Ongar. Ongar Design Guide 2019 (AECOM) details the sub areas within the civil parish. ‘Creating Space for Beauty’<sup>75</sup> and ‘Living with Beauty’<sup>76</sup> January 2020 reports recognise the link between well-being and good planning. These and Building for Life 12<sup>77</sup> have also informed this policy and related policies in sections 6.4 and 7.2.

In Section 7.2 Local Character and Design, policies cover immediate context, height scale, massing, materials and landscaping. In the built up parts of Ongar, the prevailing character and pattern are of single and two storey homes in tree and grass verge lined looping streets, with low boundary treatment, open green spaces with natural surveillance and views to the countryside beyond. The few 3 storey blocks of flats are only in the town centre or by shopping parades. In Section 6.4 policies cover housing mix, density and space standards to retain a viable cohesive and sustainable community to cater for growing families attracted to Ongar for the rural location with good primary and secondary schools.

Sustainable design policies support the creation of a safe and secure environment, with natural surveillance and active frontages, including road layout, footpath design, communal areas, dwelling boundaries, car parking. Secured By Design Homes 2019 (SBD), an Official Police Security Initiative provides design and layout advice for developments on active surveillance in addition to the expected individual door locks and other home security aspects. Design for Ongar must ensure that the car does not dominate the street scene. Ongar’s rural location and other factors<sup>78</sup> necessitates a high level of reliance on private transport including cars<sup>79</sup>. Sufficient off-street car park provision must be included in the

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<sup>72</sup> NPPF 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> See evidence file including chapter 12 achieving well designed places and paragraph 129, 139 and 131 in particular

<sup>73</sup> NPPF 2021 Ch. 2 and Para 8

<sup>74</sup> EFDC Local Plan 2011-33 on Design para 4.69

<sup>75</sup> BBBB Interim Report ‘Creating Space for Beauty’ July 2019

<sup>76</sup> BBBB Report ‘Living with Beauty’ Jan 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/living-with-beauty-report-of-the-building-better-building-beautiful-commission>

<sup>77</sup> Building for Life 12 see evidence file <http://www.builtforlifehomes.org/go/about>

<sup>78</sup> Including lack of local employment, varied employment hours, use of company cars and vans, lack of economically viable public transport as sources from NOMIS and ONS- see also Transport Section 8

<sup>79</sup> ONS figures show that Ongar households have 20% higher car ownership of 2+ vehicles than England’s average

design of all new developments and extensions, as well as electric vehicle charging points.<sup>80</sup>  
See Transport Section 8 and Policy CT3

There is opportunity to build beautifully designed homes with sufficient internal space for comfortable family living and good sized gardens to promote well-being, within a rural setting.

Applying character, place shaping, layout, open space and housing mix to a site will determine the density and housing numbers and also lead to sustainable development with the right home in the right place. The Local Plan allocated sites have an approximate housing number as a guide, but applications must meet the parish housing mix and prevailing character. Cramming or inappropriate urbanisation to this rural location does not comply with national and local planning law and guidance. At edge of settlement sites, environmental considerations on limiting harm to the wildlife and natural environment, and providing sustainable solutions on biodiversity and carbon offsetting must be included. NPPF 2021, Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places and paragraph 130 part (a) says “Planning policies and decisions should accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space). Usable green space will be expected within development sites<sup>81</sup>.

The context and character of adjacent area and housing will determine the final design and density<sup>82</sup>. The average density for the civil parish of Ongar is around 24dph, but EFDC baseline density for the district is expected to be 30dph.<sup>83</sup> Paragraph 2.88 of the Local Plan also acknowledges that it is not appropriate to apply density ranges set out in Policy SP3 mechanistically but to consider the density appropriate to the location. EFDC site selection reports on the Green Belt and Landscape Sensitivity, concludes that sites in Ongar are particularly sensitive to the impact of intensification and development because of the prevailing character of the area and the sensitive nature of the surrounding countryside or built form. Planning applications will be expected to justify the density range, housing mix and parking provision accordingly<sup>84</sup> with evidence. See also Section 6.4 and Policy ONG-RR3

Sustainable design should also ensure that new housing and outside space respects neighbours’ privacy and does not lead to overlooking or loss of private amenity space<sup>85</sup>. This is important for wellbeing and a good quality of life. Parts of the civil parish of Ongar are already considered to be deprived<sup>86</sup>. It is therefore important that new housing, including infill and conversions, does not lead to overcrowding or further deprivation or anti-social behaviour. Sufficient internal and outside private space in housing is important and achievable, as is accessible open space near new homes providing safe areas with active surveillance from nearby windows<sup>87</sup>, reducing the opportunity for crime. SBD Housing 2019 provides guidance and checklist for developments, and SBD certification is encouraged.

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<sup>80</sup> State of the Parish Report Navigus (in evidence file) and ONS statistics.

<sup>81</sup> NPPF 2021, Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places and paragraph 130 part (a) says “Planning policies and decisions should accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space).

<sup>82</sup> which is supported in the NPPF 2021

<sup>83</sup> EB801 ARUP Site selection reports

<sup>84</sup> See evidence file Letter from EFDC Chief Executive to require evidence for any deviation from housing mix

<sup>85</sup> See various national standards for proximity of residential housing in the evidence file

<sup>86</sup> ONS statistics; EFDC review of Shelley 2009 in Evidence file; Well-being Survey 2020 EFDC in Evidence file. Shelley is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest national decile of deprivation

<sup>87</sup> See examples in Ongar Design Guide 2019

The Landscape Characterisation reports for EFDC indicate that Ongar has a 'high sensitivity to change' and the functions of the Green Belt are also 'strong'<sup>88</sup>so this must be considered, to ensure any development is rural in character and does as little harm as possible to the prevailing character, including to the natural environment.

High quality design should always complement and reflect the local character of Ongar Civil Parish. This includes the finer detail of design and architecture. A high specification of design ensures and contributes to the distinctive character and amenity of the local area. See also EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033 DM 9 Policy DM9 *High Quality Design* - Section D. which relates design standards to contextual character.

Floodplains, underground springs and surface water drainage issues require careful management. Ongar's geology is that of largely underlying clay, which naturally has poor drainage. There are many examples of areas within the parish which are particularly prone to surface water flooding as indicated on Government website mapping. See also ONG-ED 5 Natural Environment. More frequent heavy downpours as a result of climate change is exacerbating the issue. Mitigation against Climate Change effects, such as flooding and higher summer temperatures, should be included in new sites, including with the provision of trees to provide shading.<sup>89</sup>

In addition, all greenfield areas being developed should limit the area of impermeable hard surfaces. Loss of grass etc. and the additional impermeable area used for housing foundations will increase the runoff towards the remaining permeable surfaces, putting added stress on its natural drainage capability. This is likely to exacerbate Ongar's surface water flooding issues. All other hard surfaces, including paths, patios, driveways and estate roads must be permeable to aid drainage. See also EFDC Local Plan Policy DM16.

High performance, energy saving buildings will improve the sustainability of the design, as will the use of local or recycled materials. Sustainable drainage ponds and mitigation of harm to wildlife and net biodiversity gain will be expected for greenfield sites. See also Natural Environment Section 7.6

In addition to reducing energy use and carbon emissions, good urban design implies a much more profound basis on which to make decisions that impact on people's lives and the social, economic and environmental sustainability of the built environment.

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<sup>88</sup>EB709/712 EFDC Land Characterisation and EB704/705 EFDC Green Belt Review and EB801  
<https://www.efdclocalplan.org/local-plan/evidence-base/>

# Policy ONG-ED4: Sustainable Design

- Policy ONG-ED4: Sustainable Design**
1. **New-build development or alterations to existing buildings must be well-designed and sustainable. This includes:**
    - a) **Incorporating active frontages (doors and windows) to street frontages and spaces, so as to provide natural surveillance to the public realm;**
    - b) **Providing a clear separation between public and private space in the layout of development, avoiding the need for high enclosures which would create blank frontages to the road;**
    - c) **Incorporating sufficient spacing around properties to allow for building maintenance and to ensure privacy and no overlooking;**
    - d) **Ensuring all hard surfaces, other than foundations of buildings, are permeable, to allow surface water penetration;**
    - e) **Ensuring discrete provision is included for bin stores, which must be screened.**
    - f) **Ensuring car park spaces and electric charging points are included early in the design stage, in accordance with Transport Policies ONG-CT3**
  
  2. **For development involving new layout (roads and footpaths), the following is also required:**
    - a) **Incorporating a high-quality public realm which is not dominated by cars, and which provides an attractive, safe and convenient environment for pedestrians, social interaction and play;**
    - b) **Ensuring landscape design is a positive and integral part of the layout, including tree planting;**
    - c) **Incorporating sustainable (urban) drainage systems into the landscape design of new housing, including ponds, and taking opportunities to enhance wildlife and biodiversity.**
  
  3. **Particular support will be given to development that Incorporates features to reduce environmental impact, such as water collection, use of local or recycled materials or high-performance buildings.**
  
  4. **Development must not take place in flood risk areas, unless specifically designed with measures to mitigate the risk or impact of flooding.**

## Interpretation of ONG-ED4

This policy should be applied together with the other design policies in this Neighbourhood Plan in Section 7 and Section 6.4 in particular. The policy emphasises the pedestrian experience. Designs with natural surveillance on to open spaces and streets is inherent in reducing anti-social behaviour and vandalism<sup>90</sup>. Justification of the density of new developments will be expected to indicate that the prevailing character of the area is maintained. 3D visuals will be encouraged.

The required Design and Access Statement of a planning application provides opportunities to explain compliance with the requirements of the policy.

‘Development including new layout (roads and footpaths)’ includes, not only EFDC Local Plan allocated sites, but also smaller developments that involve an access road to new developments.

Aspects on density are also covered in Section 6.4 Housing Mix and Standards, Policy ONG-RR3. Section 7.2 Local Character and Design and Policy ONG-ED1. Car parking space requirements are in the Transport section 8.4, Policy ONG-CT3.

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<sup>90</sup> See Secured By Design Housing 2019 ( Police initiative) in evidence file

## 7.6 Rationale: Natural Environment

A number of recent UK Government papers and policies on the Environment and Climate Change<sup>91</sup> have led to details of how the natural environment can be protected. This includes mitigation when greenfield land is built on for new homes with details in NPPF 2021, National Design Guide 2021 and National Model Design Code 2021. ECC and EFDC have both produced a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy<sup>92</sup> with a variety of proposals.

This is particularly relevant for the civil parish of Ongar because all new developments proposed in EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033 are on greenfield sites, at present in Green Belt. Ongar already has a low tree coverage; the area is subject to regular flooding both due to the two local rivers as well as surface water flooding because of underlying heavy clay soils; and the network of underground springs. The sites ONG R1-R8 are largely on well wooded sites or with good pasture, both of which are recommended to mitigate against climate change. Each of Ongar's allocated sites presents specific issues on how to accomplish net biodiversity gain due to the considerable documented wildlife, its habitats and ecosystems in the civil parish. Ongar environs has been relatively unchanged for centuries, although changes in farming methods over the 50 years has caused hedges, tree coverage and some habitats to be destroyed, with subsequent reduction in some longstanding wildlife.

This policy seeks to ensure that further building does as little damage to our natural environment as possible and to preserve our rural setting. Further detail on our existing environment is as follow, together with some mitigating steps required.

Our local landscape has scattered settlements within a longstanding agricultural landscape. The landscape has high sensitivity to change<sup>93</sup>. The small town of Chipping Ongar built up round the medieval motte and bailey Castle on a ridge of land between the two river valleys of the Roding and the Cripsey, with their confluence between Chipping Ongar and Marden Ash. Sections of these water courses have flood plains within or close to existing homes and there is a record of flooding for decades. These water courses are included in the Roding, Beam & Ingrebourne Catchment Plan<sup>94</sup> to prevent flooding of the Capital, so that solutions to Ongar's existing flooding are complex. Furthermore, proposed and recent new developments up river of the Cripsey and Roding will further exacerbate flooding in Ongar in the future. The Cripsey Brook's catchment up stream includes the Epping Forest ridge with the highest recorded precipitation in Essex. More frequent heavy downfalls cause serious flooding on the access roads to Ongar and widespread surface water flooding<sup>95</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup> See UK Government on Environment Policy and Bill and Climate Change Policy and Act

<sup>92</sup> ECC Green Infrastructure Strategy <https://www.essex.gov.uk/protecting-environment> EFDC Green Infrastructure (draft 2020) <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Draft%20green%20infrastructure%20strategy.pdf> EFDC Green Infrastructure Strategy Implementation EB159D <https://www.efdclocalplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/EB159D-EFDC-Green-Infrastructure-Strategy-LLD-2.pdf>

<sup>93</sup> EB709/712 EFDC Land Characterisation and EB801 <https://www.efdclocalplan.org/local-plan/evidence-base/>

<sup>94</sup> Roding, Beam & Ingrebourne Catchment Plan see details in Evidence file

<sup>95</sup> The Cripsey Brook catchment covers some 50.6km<sup>2</sup>. Its 16.3km course flows through an undulating productive agricultural landscape. The water level monitoring gauge is at Banson's Lane. Catchment covers higher ground east to the Epping Forest ridge where the precipitation is the highest in Essex with an average of 679mm. The wettest year was 2000 when 974mm of rain was recorded. Climate change impact on rainfall patterns results in more frequent and heavier downpours, flooding is likely to increase with rising water levels

The underlying soil type for Ongar is London Clay. This is overlain with some deposits of a mix of gravels, sand, silt and clays. There are abundant seepage lines or springs on sloping hillsides of the rivers and throughout the civil parish. Agricultural Land Classification for Ongar are Grade 2 (very good) and Grade 3 (Good to Moderate) and predominantly farmed for cereal production, but waterlogging is an issue on the heavier clays. Some fields have had land drainage installed to improve drainage.

In view of the complex system of underground springs in the area and underlying poor permeability of the heavy clay soils, any planning applications involving excavation such as for basements and including for existing buildings, must have accompanying analysis and reports to indicate avoidance of such water courses or subsequent localised flooding as a result of the said proposed development. Further suggestions to mitigate against climate change and flooding are included in the National Model Design Code including sustainable drainage details with permeable surfacing, retention tanks, reedbeds and wetlands etc. See also Section 7.5 and Policy ONG-ED4 Sustainable design.

Changes in farming methods since 1945 has resulted in a loss by 75% of the ancient hedgerows to the east of Chipping Ongar and a reduction in farmland biodiversity generally. Dutch Elm disease and Ash die back have taken their toll and also caused fragmented and gappy ancient hedgerows, which are species rich and have high biodiversity potential.

Ongar's patchy woodland, small copses, and water courses with respective flood plains together are ideal Green Corridors<sup>96</sup>. However, Ongar has only 6% land coverage as woodland, being below the 10% average for England. There is a wide range of native tree species in Ongar<sup>97</sup>, many being Ancient and Veteran trees. Ancient Woodlands such as Greensted Wood and various Ancient Hedgerows offer particular value to the environment and must be retained. Where otherwise, or diseased trees are felled, suitable replacements must be planted and maintained. Indigenous Trees and hedgerows provide the habitat for indigenous invertebrates (including insects, spiders and worms), which in turn feed other indigenous animals (including birds, mammals reptile and amphibians).

The national tree planting scheme, adopted by EFDC is supported. Benefits of such vegetation are now well documented, including within urban environments for shading and flood prevention. Landscape Design in Planning applications must include frontages with hedges and trees including tree lined streets. The National Model Design Code 2021 gives detail and states:-

*"57. Development should enhance the natural as well as the built environment. Nature is essential for health and wellbeing, for biodiversity, shading and cooling, noise mitigation, air quality and mitigating flood risk as well as contributing to tackling the climate emergency. Nature is also central to the creation of beautiful places.*

*"58. Design codes need to ensure that nature and the historic landscape is woven into the design of places. This may include the amount and type of open space, the response to flood risk and the protection, enhancement and promotion of biodiversity."*

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across the catchment causing serious flooding on the access roads to Ongar and widespread surface water flooding. Extracted from Environment Agency Website see also Thames River Basin Management Plan <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency>

<sup>96</sup>See detail in Section 8.2 Local Green Space and ONP Projects and Actions Appendix

<sup>97</sup> Ongar Tree Strategy see EFDC Evidence Base EB1005 <https://www.efdclocalplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/EB1005-Ongar-Community-Tree-Strategy-EFDC-2008.pdf>





*Many footpaths pass through our rich green corridors*

Ongar is fortunate in having several protected species, both European Protected Species<sup>98</sup> (including all bats and Great Crested Newts) and UK protected amphibian species<sup>99</sup>(such as Slow Worm, Grass Snake, Common Lizard) and protected mammals such as Badgers. Ongar's woods and hedges provide habitats for songbirds protected under the 1981

Act. Birds of prey, including buzzards, the red kite and various owls including the Barn Owl are regularly noted within the countryside, as are other animals including the Fox, Hare, Rabbit, Mole, Field and Harvest Mice, Water Vole, Muntjac Deer and Fallow Deer. Sightings of Otters have been seen, but Hedgehogs are much reduced in recent years.

Illumination of habitats through external lighting and street lighting disrupts the time limited feeding patterns of protected bats in particular. Although street lighting is often required to reduce crime and personal safety, this must be avoided. This could be achieved using of appropriate low level and low energy lighting with downlighters.

Ongar's rich biodiversity is vulnerable to climate change and also to development. Environmental policies in the EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033<sup>100</sup> also help to address this vulnerability.

Our rural setting and protection of its wildlife is imp established networks of footpaths and bridleways<sup>102</sup> offer access to our attractive countryside. Furthermore, 93% of the Residents' Survey respondents considered that provision of Green Corridors for wildlife and maintaining the natural habitat could lessen the impact of development on the environment. The National Model Design Code Section N Nature includes biodiversity design principles and examples to include in developments.



Air quality is important in the conservation of the natural environment; pollution and poor air quality is also detrimental to our health and well-being. Having sufficient trees is one of

<sup>98</sup> Habitats Directive/Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

<sup>99</sup> Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

<sup>100</sup> EFDC Local Plan policies on: Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure; Protected Species, Priority Species and Priority Habitats; Tree Protection; Protection, Enhancement, Management and Monitoring of Biodiversity; Landscape Character and Features; and Green Buffers.

<sup>101</sup> See Residents Survey 2018 in the evidence file 90% agreed/strongly agreed that access to the countryside was good

<sup>102</sup> See Section 8.6 and Policy ONG-CT5 Footpaths and Cycle Routes and OS map of the civil parish

the ways helping to address poor air quality. Trees and hedges help to filter out damaging chemicals from the traffic fumes<sup>103</sup>. Such planting with appropriate species alongside busy roads can reduce pollution levels and is to be encouraged in Ongar Civil Parish. Where new homes face or back on to the busy A414 (including ONG R1/2 West Ongar Concept) or Chipping Ongar High Street, sufficient planting of appropriate hedging and trees will be required edging the highway to help filter out pollution.

Whilst acknowledging that all development on greenfield sites will have an adverse effect on the green environment, development plans for Ongar must indicate what measures will be taken to protect or rehome existing wildlife and their habitats, increase biodiversity<sup>104</sup> and ensure future stewardship. Planting of street trees, hedges and grass verges will be expected to help mitigate against climate change and poor air quality. Mitigating against climate change is complex. However, the use of high performance, low carbon footprint materials will be expected as will planning applications that comply with the National Model Design Code 2021 or subsequent revisions and current Government Environment Policy.

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<sup>103</sup> See details on particle filtration in Beckett K P, Freer-Smith P and Taylor G (2000) *Journal of Arboriculture* 26 (1), 12-19.

<sup>104</sup> Net biodiversity gain is expected to be a requirement in planning shortly. A new set of standards has been developed by Building with Nature which will be useful in complying with the policy.

## Policy ONG-ED5: Natural Environment

**Policy ONG-ED5: Natural Environment**

1. **Development must enhance or have no unacceptable adverse impact on the rural and natural environment of Ongar and on local water courses, ponds, wildlife habitats, biodiversity and eco-systems. This includes:**
  - a) **Retention of ancient woodlands, hedgerows and veteran trees**
  - b) **Maintaining the open and rural setting of Chipping Ongar and other rural settlements and avoiding coalescence;**
  - c) **Ensuring that any external lighting avoids illumination of wildlife habitats;**
  - d) **Avoiding interruption of underground springs, including through the insertion of basements to existing buildings.**
  
2. **To meet the requirements of this policy, any adverse environmental impact of development should be offset by incorporating positive environmental features, such as:**
  - a) **High quality landscape design, in particular the use of trees and planting to address air quality and create net gains in biodiversity;**
  - b) **Replacing felled trees with suitable additional trees and shrubs**
  - c) **High performance buildings with low energy-use requirements;**
  - d) **Use of green features, such as green or brown walls or roofs;**
  - e) **Features to support biodiversity, wildlife and ecology.**

### Interpretation of ONG-ED5

New planting of trees and hedges, using indigenous local species will be encouraged and new streets will be expected to be tree lined. See also Policy ONG-ED1 Local Character.

Features to support wildlife and ecology could include bird boxes, bat boxes, swift bricks and hedgehog gaps in fences. Providing Green Corridors for wildlife to link with open countryside is to be encouraged in developments. Local species are listed within the Rationale of this Policy. Semi natural open space provided within a development could include a wildlife pond and areas of wildflowers or meadows.

See also ECC and EFDC Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> ECC Green Infrastructure <https://www.essex.gov.uk/protecting-environment> and EFDC Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Draft%20green%20infrastructure%20strategy.pdf>

## 7.7 Rationale: Landscape and Amenity Buffer Zones

Most strategic sites in EFDC Local Plan for Ongar are immediately adjacent to existing edge of settlement homes. Many of these have very short gardens, but a compensating open view to the countryside beyond, which until now was in the Metropolitan Green Belt and thus protected against building. New development adjacent to these existing properties must respect their residential amenity and lessen the effect of loss of openness and views.

New homes overlooking these properties and gardens should be avoided within the layout and design of any new greenfield site. Some of the open space requirement within an allocated site could be situated close to the boundaries of existing homes and a mixture of trees and hedge planted. Early public consultation with affected household groups will be expected, as well as with the Statutory Consultees<sup>106</sup> of Ongar Town Council and its Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group ONPCG, prior to formal detailed planning application, in order to achieve the best possible solution.

A Buffer zone will be expected where any new development flanks existing properties. Development sites will be expected to provide suitable detail to ensure that existing neighbouring properties are not overlooked, overshadowed or have their level of light compromised.

West Ongar Concept Framework Plan<sup>107</sup> has specific requirements. "It is located in an area of high landscape sensitivity. Development proposals should be carefully designed to minimise harm to the wider landscape taking into account the development's setting in the landscape and the local landscape character..."<sup>108</sup> ONG.R2 (land at Bowes Field), is one of two sites in the west Ongar Concept Framework, allocated as part of EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033. The open space requirement for this site should include a landscape buffer to properties that were formally flanked by green belt land<sup>109</sup>. Most properties in Great Lawn and The Pavilions in particular, have very shallow rear gardens. The landscape buffer must be able to adequately protect residential amenity including light, privacy, and overlooking. It would also act as a wildlife corridor and a positive resource in terms of wildlife and biodiversity, to help offset the impacts of the development.

The approach access road into the new estate from Chipping Ongar High Street along the strip, should form part of the landscape buffer and include landscaped trees and shrubs or hedging at the sides and adjacent to existing homes of The Pavilions. By being more vegetated, the access would also provide a more inviting approach than usual housing estates, whilst respecting the rural character of the neighbourhood.

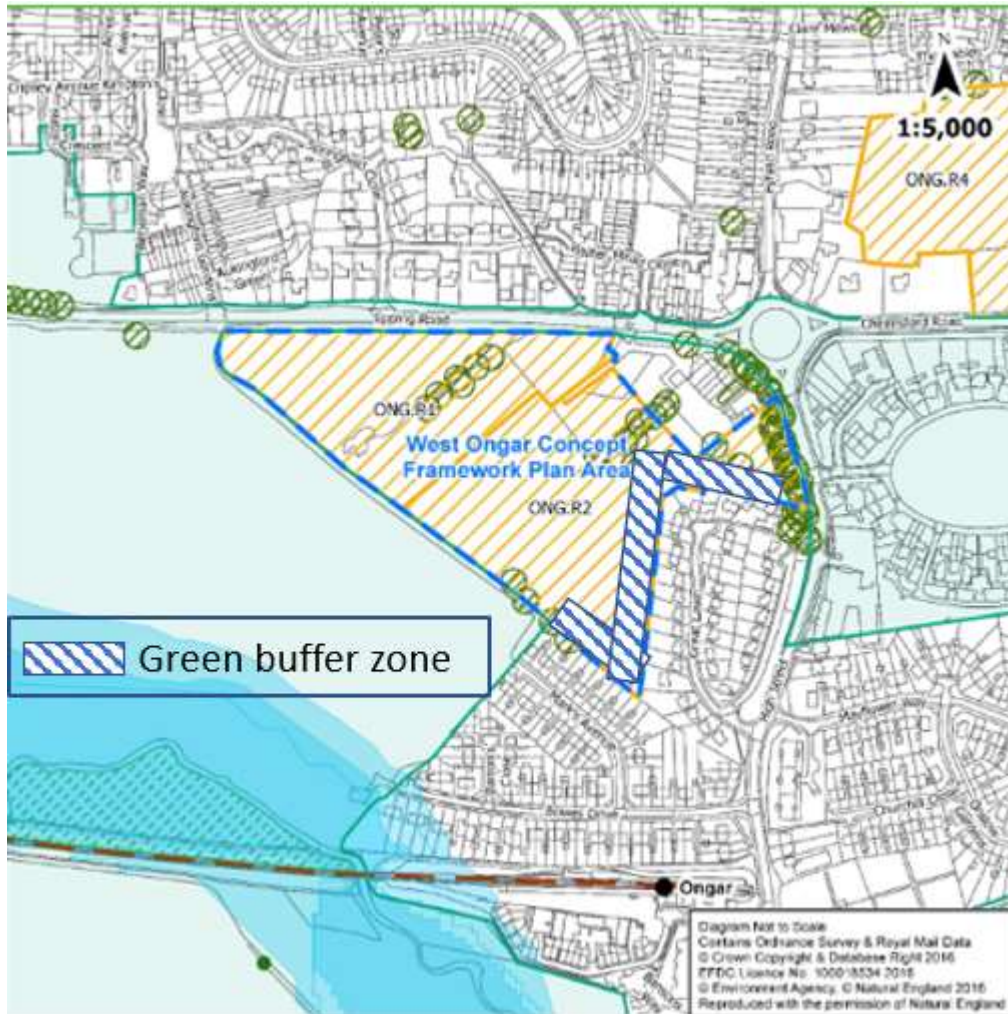
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<sup>106</sup> This is a requirement in EFDC Local Plan para 2.102 for sites delivering 50 or more homes

<sup>107</sup> A Concept Framework Plan involves two or more adjacent allocated sites. The development and infrastructure in a coordinated way between the interested parties and endorsed by EFDC prior to submission of any planning applications. For more information see EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033 and its Glossary

<sup>108</sup> EFDC Local Plan Appendix 6 Site specific Requirements for Site Allocations

<sup>109</sup> The land was used for decades as recreational area for an orphanage and then special school.



**(Plan 7.7 buffer area)**

*Adapted EFDC Plan of West Ongar Concept Framework showing ONG.R2 with landscape buffer area shown in hatched blue- not drawn to scale*

## **Policy ONG-ED6: Landscape and Amenity Buffer Zones**

### **Policy ONG-ED6: Landscape and Amenity Buffer Zones**

1. Development that flanks existing housing must include sufficient landscape or garden separation to protect the amenities of the occupiers of that housing.
2. In developing Local Plan site ONG.R2, a landscape buffer should be provided to the south and east boundaries where the site flanks the rear gardens of existing houses in Great Lawn and The Pavilions (see plan 7.7).

## Interpretation of ONG-ED6

The policy is especially important where existing housing has short rear gardens, so that loss of open space behind could create harm to amenity through proximity and overlooking.

The policy highlights the importance of landscape design as an integral part of site planning. To fulfil the requirement to create a landscape buffer by existing homes, the planning should include taller species, in addition to smaller planting and ground cover. Although the policy does not specify the depth of the buffer, it is envisaged that it would be around 15 metres in depth, to provide an effective buffer. This would enable effective implementation of EFDC Local Plan 2011-3033 including DM9 High Quality Design Section, Privacy and Amenity H(ii)&(iii).

For Part 2 of the Policy, Site ONG.R2 (allocated in EFDC Local Plan) is part of the West Ongar Concept Framework Plan and should be applied to the south and east boundary of ONG.R2 where development is adjacent to existing housing. These existing properties were built with very short gardens but adjacent to Green Belt protected recreational space. This necessitates careful consideration of separation of properties to avoid harm to amenity

Where landscaping is provided, it is important for there to be longer-term arrangements for maintenance.

See also Section 7.2 Local Character and Design and Policy ONG-ED1

# Community and Transport Infrastructure

## 8.1 Purpose

The purposes of the policies in this section are:

- Creating more sustainable live/work patterns.
- Maintaining or enhancing a range of local community facilities.

The policies in this Chapter seek to ensure that development is supported by both community and transport infrastructure. They need to be read in conjunction with the Rural Regeneration and Environment and Design policies.

## 8.2 Rationale: Local Green Space

The value of Greenspace for communities is well recognised, and EFDC Green Infrastructure Strategy sets out a variety of opportunities for the District and local communities to bring forward and implement. In Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Appendix Projects and Actions, there are proposals to link existing and new open spaces in and around Chipping Ongar to provide an area of green corridors, footpaths & cycleways, informal recreation and parkland, as well as a river walk with wetland possibilities, and additional tree planting. Such recreation areas could also connect to North Weald and Epping via the Epping Ongar (Heritage) Railway and the Essex Way. Thus, not only would these proposed Projects serve Ongar's community, but also attract visitors, including away from Epping Forest, and boost the local economy. The Ancient Monument of Ongar Castle with its medieval town enclosure is still visible in the historic town centre of Chipping Ongar, so that other Projects such as regenerating Chipping Ongar town centre, will add to the Visitor potential.

Protecting existing open greenspace in the Parish is an important step in establishing a green corridor, good connectivity and access for future generations.

NPPF Paragraph 101 enables neighbourhood plans to designate land as Local Green Space, which should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces is only designated when a plan is prepared or updated and should endure beyond the end of the plan period (in this case 2033).

Additionally Paragraph 102 requires Local Green Space designation to "only be used where the green space is:

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- b) 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
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land."<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> NPPF paragraph 102. Ministry of Housing and Local Government. Revised NPPF July 2021 Government Publications.

Designation of four Local Green Spaces for Ongar<sup>111</sup> will protect the community from further loss. Some informal existing open space will be lost to new development

EFDC Open Space Strategy Final Report Nov 2017 (EB703), concluded that Ongar had an overall additional Open Space requirement for the period of the EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033 of 14.24 hectares (ha). This is broken down as:

- Amenity Greenspace deficit 1.8ha
- Public Parks & Gardens 6.4 ha
- Facilities for children and Young People (LAPS, LEAPS AND NEAPS)<sup>112</sup> of 1.9ha
- Natural and seminatural Greenspace 3.81ha
- Allotments 0.13ha

Policy ONG-CT1 Local Green Space identifies green spaces already used and valued by the community, that need protecting as valued amenity Local Green Space. These are as follows:

**LGS1. Land adjacent to Ongar Castle** (Castle Farm field and public footpath)

This level grassy site covering 1.94 hectares links the Pleasance Gardens adjacent to Ongar High Street with the 6.78 hectares of the Love Lane Jubilee Park. This is in the centre of the community within a short walk for residents and popular with walkers and dog walkers. The large field (cut annually for hay) with mature trees along its boundaries is in the tranquil setting of the Ancient Monument, with far reaching views to the east over the Roding river valley. A well-used footpath runs adjacent to the moat of Ongar Castle and leads the visitors towards the expansive views across the valley of the River Roding to High Ongar and southeast to the Brentwood Telecommunications Mast. A fine old horse chestnut tree near the Scout Hut is one of the 50 Favourite Trees of the District.



*LGS1. Land adjacent to Ongar Castle (Castle Farm field and public footpath)*

<sup>111</sup> Ongar Local Green Space Assessment and Proposals 2020 see evidence file

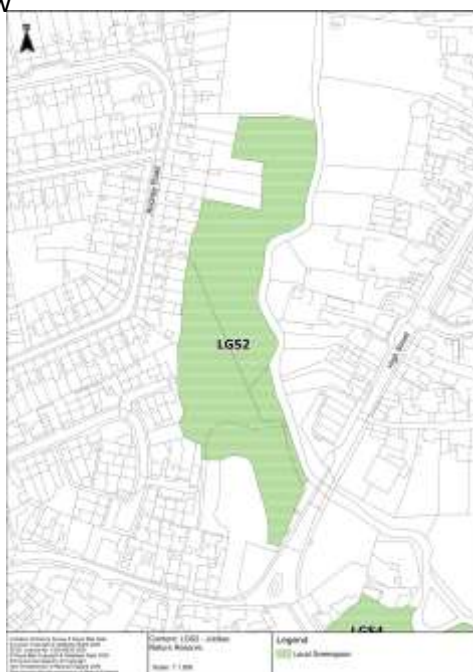
<sup>112</sup> Local Areas for Play (LAP), Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPS), Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPS)



**LGS2. Jubilee Nature Reserve, otherwise known as Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve.**

Lying to the south West of Chipping Ongar with boundary of the Cripsey Brook and easily accessible for the community, there is increasing establishment of habitats for a number of different birds, small mammals and other river wildlife as identified in local, district and countywide records. Some are protected or declining species. Ongar Cripsey Brook Jubilee Nature Reserve (SO5) was designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 2007. Protected as a Fields in Trust site since 2015, its 0.82 hectares lies within the flood plain of the Cripsey Brook. A row of tall poplars lines the footpath linking Rodney Road with the High Street and the small flowery meadow alongside the Brook allows free access for walkers to spot various insects and possibly catch the occasional glimpse of a passing kingfisher. Badgers trundle through here after dark and bats swoop between the willows in search of food.

W



*LGS2. Jubilee Nature Reserve, otherwise known as Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve.*

### **LGS3. Land East of Cripsey between Bansons Lane and Victoria Rd.**

This scrubland between the Cripsey and Chipping Ongar High Street was a well-used network of footpaths, but recently partly cut-off by new development off Chipping Ongar High Street. It offers a natural Buffer to the open countryside and is tranquil. Originally called Long Meadow in the Chipping Ongar Tithe Award of 1838, this green open space is just over 0.8 Hectares of former meadowland. Today this area is covered with developing Hawthorn scrub with rank grasses, nettles and large amounts of Hemlock. Willows grow alongside the Brook. Some management would be required to prepare a useable footpath/shared cycle route in order to bypass a section of the High Road and link to become part of a green corridor round Chipping Ongar and the west of Shelley<sup>113</sup>



*LGS3. Land East of Cripsey between Bansons Lane and Victoria Rd.*

<sup>113</sup> See Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Projects and Actions Appendix

#### **LGS4. Land between Longfields, Coopers Hill and farmland. Longfields**

This site covers 0.39 Hectares and has been planted up with a mixture of deciduous trees set in grass planted up with a variety of spring bulbs. It is overlooked by the houses to east, south and west. Its northern boundary is the well vegetated corridor of the Cripsey Brook beyond which there is farmland. A welcome area near the main road filled with spring bulbs and trees, but big enough to confirm Chipping Ongar's open character is of a rural, not urban nature. It provides a gap in the residential street with views over pastures either side of the Cripsey and footpaths over the fields.



*LGS4. Land between Longfields, Coopers Hill and farmland. Longfields*

*Below- Daffodils at Longfields*



**Policy ONG-CT1: Local Green Space**

**Policy ONG-CT1: Local Green Space**

- 1. The following spaces are designated as Local Green Space:**  
  
**LGS1 Land adjacent to Ongar Castle**  
**LGS2 Jubilee Nature Reserve otherwise known as Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve**  
**LGS3 land East of Cripsey between Basons Lane and Victoria Rd**  
**LGS4 Land between Longfields, Coopers Hill and farmland**
  
- 2. New development must not encroach onto Local Green Space or have any adverse impact on the open character, amenity, accessibility or special community value of the space.**

**Interpretation of ONG-CT1**

The policy designated Local Green Space and sets out how impacts of development should be considered. This includes impacts of development near to or adjacent to the space.

National policy makes clear that Local Green Space has similar protection to Green Belts (para 101). However, it should be noted that the purpose of Local Green Space is about recognising and protecting special community value, rather than the five purposes for Green Belt.

### 8.3 Rationale: Community, Cultural, Leisure and Sports Facilities

Community, leisure, and cultural facilities are important for the social and economic welfare of Ongar Civil Parish community and also serve its surrounding rural settlements. Ongar is a lively active community supported by sports, cultural and social clubs for a variety of different interests and age groups. Facilities and amenities include Ongar Leisure centre and swimming pool, Zinc Arts Centre, Budworth Hall, several Church Halls and Ongar Public Library. These are mainly located in the proximity of Chipping Ongar town centre. Nearby is Ongar Sports Community Club at Jubilee Park and the various Open Spaces are located throughout the Civil Parish and at ‘edge of settlement’.

Ongar’s thriving sporting community has been “a major part of Ongar life going back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century”<sup>114</sup>. Today there are facilities for football, rugby, netball, badminton, tennis, cricket, squash, petanque and croquet, although it lost its facilities for its hockey and bowls clubs some time ago. Although requiring refurbishment, the Leisure Centre, with 4 indoor courts, and fitness and gym facilities and a swimming pool is well-supported<sup>115</sup>. Land was originally bequeathed, and the facility provided for the community in the late 1960s. The pool also enables the local primary schools to comply with the National Curriculum and is also valued by under 18s and older residents, many of whom do not have a car<sup>116</sup>.



It is important for continued community well-being that sufficient new or enhanced sports and leisure facilities are provided in the civil parish at the same time as new housing. In addition, open space and playing areas for youngsters need to be provided with developments over 10 dwellings<sup>117</sup> such as Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) but provision for larger Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) and areas for older youngsters and adults, could be more central to support the regeneration of community hub in the town

centre. Provision of LEAPs and NEAPs is covered in EFDC Local Plan policies and arrangements for developer contribution. Open Spaces are dealt with more fully in section 8.5 Infrastructure Priorities for Ongar and section 7.5 Natural Environment and 8.2 Local Greenspace.

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<sup>114</sup> Ongar Sports Club states in its 2019 Plans and Aspirations for the future “*Sport has been a major part of Ongar life going back to the 19th century. Ongar cricket club was formed in 1845 and is one of the oldest clubs in the county. Ongar Football Club was one of the founding clubs of the Essex Olympian League over 120 years ago. Ongar Tennis Club was formed in the 1950’s. So, sport has a long tradition in the town.*”

<sup>115</sup> Resident Survey 2018 questions 6.3.1 and 6.3.2 suggest many would not travel if Ongar leisure centre closed and relocated outside the parish. On average in 2016-2017 there were around 22,000 visits a month

<sup>116</sup> see Residents Survey 2018 and Youth Survey in evidence files and ONS statistics-14.2% households in 2011 had no access to a car

<sup>117</sup> Fields In Trust guidelines



An audit of existing sports related provision was carried out by 4Global for EFDC in 2016 and is included in their reports.<sup>118</sup> An update was carried out by ONPCG in 2018/9<sup>119</sup>, which reflects recent loss of outdoor courts and pitches at Ongar Leisure centre and that the Jubilee Park sports provision is no longer run by Ongar Town Council but a Trust.

Conclusions of 4 Global were that further playing pitches would be required<sup>120</sup> (football and rugby) within the 2011-2033 period including all-weather pitches and, that the provision of built facilities<sup>121</sup> (health and fitness) in Ongar needed to be 'protected' [paragraph 9.4.2] and 'enhanced' [paragraph 9.4.3]. Provision of a future Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) court would provide facilities for important local sports such as netball which are currently unable to train or host competitions due to inadequate facilities. Netball court provision is not assessed in 4 Global Plying Pitch Strategy. (see also ONG-CT4 Infrastructure Priorities)

Some local community halls provide facilities for a limited number of fitness and sports and are also limited by the number of people that can be accommodated at a single meeting. Any loss of such facilities would be detrimental to the community cohesiveness.<sup>122</sup>

NPPF paragraph 93 and paragraph 98 ensure that planning policies plan positively for the provision of the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that the community needs, based on assessments of the need and opportunities for new provision.

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<sup>118</sup> EB703 EFDC Open Space strategy 2017 (4Global); EB 714 EFDC Playing Pitch Strategy 2018 v. 7.0 (4 Global); EB 713 EFDC Built Facility Strategy 2018 v.7.0 (4 Global) see EFDC Local Plan website Evidence Base

<sup>119</sup> See evidence files for more information

<sup>120</sup> EB 714 EFDC Playing Pitch Strategy 2018 v. 7.0 (4 Global) see EFDC Local Plan website Evidence Base

<sup>121</sup> EB 713 EFDC Built Facility Strategy 2018 v.7.0 (4 Global) see EFDC Local Plan website Evidence Base

<sup>122</sup> See Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Projects and Actions Appendix

Epping Forest District Local Plan 1998 and Alterations 2006 (published 2008) – Policy WLP8.23 protects Open Space, community sport and recreation facilities from development. EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033 Policy D 4 Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities offers similar protection to facilities valued by the community. Epping Forest District Council compiled the Open Space, Sports Facility and Playing Pitch Strategy in 2012 (EB700) and commissioned 4 *Global* to update this in 2017. Citing the Essex Sports Facilities Strategy 2007-2020<sup>123</sup>, EB713 recommends (among other things) investment to maintain current levels of provision of facilities and goes further with enhancement recommendations as previously stated. EB1101B Infrastructure Delivery Schedule 2017 supports some general recommendations with some potential funding to come from s106 contributions.

EFDC's Built Facilities Strategy (4 Global) 2018 v 7.0 (EB713) considers indoor swimming pools, sports halls (of a minimum size) and health and fitness suites. This concluded that Ongar's swimming pool is at 'the end of life and requires modernisation or replacement; the sports hall has high unmet demand and requires refurbishment; and the Health and Fitness provision is not only 'vital' but need modernising and improving. Ongar Leisure Centre serves a wide rural population, including outside EFDC boundaries. Any replacement' but must remain in the civil parish of Ongar. Recent petitions indicated the strength of feeling from local residents.

It is Ongar Neighbourhood Plan's aim that any new community facilities should be centrally located within Ongar Civil Parish and easily accessed from the Chipping Ongar town centre, (except for smaller children's playing areas – Local Areas for Play (LAP) and Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP) which would be located within or in close proximity of development sites). This will ensure that there is an effective community hub, especially as the retail element of the town centre has declined.

The responses in the Residents Survey<sup>123</sup> reveal that over 70% consider additional outdoor and indoor sports pitches and fitness facilities are needed.

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<sup>123</sup> Residents Survey 2018 *see* evidence file

## **Policy ONG-CT2: Community, Cultural, Leisure and Sports Facilities**

### **Policy ONG-CT2: Community, Cultural, Leisure and Sports Facilities**

- 1. Development involving the loss of community facilities will be supported only where new or better facilities are provided in close proximity and within Ongar civil parish or where there is evidence that the facility is no longer required to meet local need.**
- 2. Particular regard should be made to impacts on the following key facilities: The playing pitches and courts, Ongar Leisure Centre, Ongar Library and youth facilities.**

### **Interpretation of ONG-CT2**

In the case of facilities in and around the defined Small District Centre, close proximity would mean within or immediately adjacent to that defined boundary. Elsewhere within the neighbourhood area, in close proximity means within the Ongar Neighbourhood Area (i.e., within Ongar Civil Parish boundaries) and preferably within walking distance of the original facility or amenity and the centre of Chipping Ongar (which is the Budworth Hall).

The policy seeks to maintain the level of community facilities and amenities in the area, including those in and around the centre. Provision of new facilities is supported by Policy ONG-RR1. Consideration will be requested to designate the named facilities as Assets of Community Value



## 8.4 Rationale: Transport and Movement

The National Design Guide 2021 and the National Model Design Code 2021 states that well-designed places will have accessible forms of transport, safe walking and cycling for local journeys, sufficient car parking and cycle provision that is not intrusive or dominates the street scene and that designs enable easy access for refuse collection or emergency services.

Various reports for EFDC and ONPCG<sup>124</sup> as well as EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033 paragraph 3.87 recognise the difficulties in providing viable solutions for public transport and cycleways in more rural areas such as Ongar. However, new proposed housing developments can provide a connected network of streets with walking and cycling routes and ensure that there is sufficient high quality car parking provision and cycle storage, well integrated and which does not dominate the local environment.<sup>125</sup>

Due to the relatively isolated rural location of Ongar, with little local employment<sup>126</sup> and inadequate public transport<sup>127</sup>, Ongar residents have a high dependence on cars. 49.2% of Ongar households own or have access to two or more vehicles<sup>128</sup> which is nearly 20% higher than the average for England. More than half of Ongar's workers commute outside the area including to London<sup>129</sup>, with over two thirds of all workers' main journey being by car<sup>130</sup>.

Existing parking issues in Ongar<sup>131</sup> relate to on street and overspill parking in some housing estates. Insufficient space for the growing demand is also an issue at Ongar Health Centre, and at times Chipping Ongar Town Centre, and at Recreation and Leisure facilities. Ongar serves a large rural hinterland, providing an important function to a large geographic area. Local roads are congested as recognised by EFDC<sup>132</sup>. Ongar's road network includes very busy PR1 routes, which also cause problems of movement within the parish itself<sup>133</sup>. Ongar itself has a small population. The extent of through traffic is confirmed by the January 2017 ECC traffic survey daily traffic flow of over 17,500 through the High Street, many being HGVs.

Research conducted by Epping Forest District Council and others<sup>134</sup> have identified that the key transport and movement issues facing Ongar are:- limited public transport accessibility, a high reliance on cars, insufficient parking provision in the town, major problems in the high

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<sup>124</sup>Including ARUP Site Selection Report Town Proforma of Chipping Ongar 2016 EB801O Appendix C and ONPCG Residents Survey and Town Survey -see evidence files

<sup>125</sup> See National Model Design Code parts M1 M2 & M3 and Essex Design Guide

<sup>126</sup> Several major employment sites in Ongar including the May and Baker site at the Fyfield for housing

<sup>127</sup> TfL also closed the Central line link in the mid-1990s, limiting public transport options further. Epping Ongar Railway is now a privately owned Historic railway and unlikely to be re-established as a commuter line

<sup>128</sup> Residents Survey 2018 questions 4.2 and ONS 2011 census and ONS

<sup>129</sup> car ownership, as shown in the Rural Community Survey for Ongar (Parish Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) Rural evidence project October 2013 – p35; Transport and connectivity: Access to private transport and in the last Census ONS statistics 2011 in RCCE and Navigus Reports see evidence files

<sup>130</sup> ONS 2011 and Ongar State of The Parish Report (Navigus) see Evidence files

<sup>131</sup> Residents Survey 2018 and Town Survey and Ongar Design Guide see Evidence files

<sup>132</sup> EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033 Sustainable Transport Corridors paragraphs 3.82 and 3.84 in particular

<sup>133</sup> The A414 dissects the parish between Chipping Ongar and Shelley, and Chipping Ongar High Street A128 is problematic for all users and residents and subject to further congestion when the M11 or M25 have issues.

<sup>134</sup> EB801 O ARUP EFDC Site Selection Reports Appendix C Town Proforma- Chipping Ongar

street caused by high levels of through traffic and particularly HGVS, and poor facilities and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.

Government policy on transport and parking acknowledges the need for sufficient parking provision<sup>135</sup>. ECC has adopted a minimum parking space requirement, which is also used by EFDC<sup>136</sup>. Context appraisal and local character of the parish of Ongar confirms that Ongar's location is not appropriate for lower numbers of car park spaces. ECC has also said :

***“The Highway Authority does not consider Ongar to be an accessible location in terms of good access to other modes of sustainable travel and consequently a reduction in the parking provision would not be supported at this location”.***<sup>137</sup>

National Design Guide (2021) para 67 requires “strategies for parking that support the overall quality of the place” , The National Model Design Code 2021 and NPPF 2021 provide more detail, as does Essex Design Guide and Ongar Design Guide.

All Ongar developments will be expected to justify the residential parking spaces provision, fully considering residents' need for travel beyond Ongar, in compliance with Essex Parking Standards 2009 as appropriate for the rural community of Ongar. Design must ensure that the car does not dominate the street scene, by providing sufficient off-street car parking in new developments, located where cars can be seen by owners and neighbours. Refuse collections and emergency vehicles must also have assurance of unobstructed access.

Larger homes should provide more than 2 car parking spaces<sup>138</sup> in accordance with the expected occupancy, to prevent overspill car parking onto the street or any of Ongar's other roads, which would exacerbate existing parking issues.

Car parking provision also requires conveniently placed electric charging points for each new home or parking area (see Section 7.5 Sustainable Design and policy ONG-ED4). Wherever possible, designs should be adaptable<sup>139</sup>, and allow for features such as new charging technologies. In order to encourage other modes of transport, all new dwellings are expected to provide conveniently placed secure cycle storage.

Due to existing capacities, road junction improvements will be required to accommodate increased traffic, especially from the larger developments such as at A414 by the 4 Wantz roundabout in the north and the junction of Chipping Ongar High St, The Borough (leading to Greensted Rd) and Coopers Hill in the south. This should include repositioning bus stops<sup>140</sup>.

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<sup>135</sup> Eric Pickles statement March 2015 <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2015-03-25/HCWS488> and NPPF 2021; National Design Guide 2021; National Model Design Code 2021

<sup>136</sup> Local Plan 2011-2033 para 3.92 as rationale for Policy T2

<sup>137</sup> Essex Highways in 2021, objected to 9 flats being built with lower than Essex Parking Standard at the south end of Ongar High Street for the above reason and of the consequences of overspill onto local roads and stated: “ *The Parking Standards Design and Good Practice September 2009 recommends minimum parking provision levels for residential properties*”... ***“The Highway Authority does not consider Ongar to be an accessible location in terms of good access to other modes of sustainable travel and consequently a reduction in the parking provision would not be supported at this location”.*** “

<sup>138</sup> Essex Parking Standards 2009 stipulates 2 spaces for a 2 bed or larger house or flat and visitor space.

<sup>139</sup> Essex Design Guide includes various design ideas for parking that does not dominate the street scene including undercroft and underdeck parking, which could be applied in some developments

<sup>140</sup> There are several proposals locally to address this situation, improve pedestrian safety and provide additional long stay and coach parking in the south of the town

The existing built up area in Ongar includes pedestrian short cuts from estates to community facilities, but many routes by necessity have to follow along Chipping Ongar High Street. This has stretches of very narrow footways in the historic area, making it unsafe to encourage cycling in the High Street itself. However, there is the opportunity for new estates (including ONG R1-8 sites allocated in EFDC Local Plan) sited at the edge of settlement to provide additional pedestrian and cycle friendly short cuts linking into existing routes, including PROWS to encourage walking or cycling for local journeys.

Access roads into allocated sites ONG-R1-8 in EFDC Local Plan are directly onto main roads, or in the case of ONG-R5 a narrow country lane near a primary school. To further support pedestrians, safe crossings and pedestrian crossings should be provided on routes to enable safe access to link to bus stops, school routes, shops and other community amenities.

Policies for regeneration of the historic Chipping Ongar town centre is in Section 6.3, Policy RR2 and where issues are outside the scope of a planning policy, Actions are in the Appendix to Ongar Neighbourhood Plan. Heavy through traffic detracts from High Street's ambience. A by-pass was proposed several times over the last 70 years round Shelley and the east of Chipping Ongar and Marden Ash. There are no approved plans for such in the lifetime of the EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033. Ongar community continues to work with Essex Highways and EFDC to resolve the existing congestion in the High Street and to exclude the heaviest and largest HGVs, which are also causing undue pollution and damage.

As the local economy improves, new homes built and visitors increase, additional parking provision is likely to be needed in Ongar Town Centre, as well as by the Health Centre and sports and leisure facilities. See also Section 6.3 and Policy RR2. With only 3 small car parks in Chipping Ongar and many first floors of shops being converted into residential, there is a need for another long stay carpark for residents, employees of local businesses.

Any new employment or industrial site in or near Ongar which creates traffic movement, including HGVs, which will adversely impact on the attractiveness and congestion in the historic centre will be unacceptable, including those creating significant increase in air and noise pollution of all kinds. Developers will be expected to provide a Transport Statement to mitigate against any impact and include monitoring and enforcing methods.

## **Policy ONG-CT3: Transport and Movement**

### **Policy ONG-CT3: Transport and Movement**

- 1. All residential developments must include a balanced range of transport options. This includes**
  - a) Ensuring sites are served by adequate roads and footways with particular regard to traffic capacity and pedestrian safety**
  - b) Providing sufficient off-street parking facilities to support the higher levels of car ownership in Ongar as a primarily rural area, including multiple car households, by using Essex Parking Standards 2009**
  - c) Providing parking through a mix of covered space, garage space and driveways;**
  - d) Providing secure and screened cycle storage in all development, including for each new house;**
- 2. For residential developments involving the creation of new road layout, the following is also required:**
  - a) Taking opportunities to link to surrounding footpaths (PROWs);**
  - b) Providing good pedestrian permeability and the creation of safe and convenient pedestrian routes within the site, including for people with limited mobility or using mobility scooters;**
  - c) Providing safe crossing facilities where necessary to link to nearby shops, bus stops, schools and other facilities;**
  - d) Providing convenient charging points for electric vehicles.**
- 3. When considering employment development likely to generate movements by heavy goods vehicles, particular attention must be paid to the impacts of such vehicle movements on the town centre and its historic environment in terms of noise, disturbance, pollution, air quality, congestion and attractiveness to users of the High Street.**
- 4. Employment development should include facilities for secure storage of cycles. For business parking areas of more than 10 car spaces, conveniently located charging points for electrical vehicles should be provided.**

## Interpretation of ONG-CT3

The policy should be applied according to the scale of development. Clearly, the parts of the policy relating to layout and permeability apply where new layout is being provided. Other parts of the policy would apply to all scales of development, from one dwelling upwards, for example the need for secure storage space for cycles.

Due to the lack of local employment in Ongar Civil Parish, poor commuter public transport connections and the resultant reliance on car transport, there is a requirement to provide sufficient off-street car parking space in compliance with Essex Parking Standards 2009. The Essex Design Guide, National Design Guide 2021, National Model Design Code 2021, and Secured by Design provide further guidance, in applying the policy. Ongar Design Guide provides further clarification and examples of concerns.

'Convenient charging points' means adjacent to private driveway or parking space. See also requirements in the EFDC Local Plan 2019-2133

The policy should be applied to larger extensions where it would create an additional need for off street parking.

See also:

Section 7.5 Sustainable Design Section and Policy

Section 6.3 Chipping Ongar High Street and Policy relating to providing sufficient parking, including for visitors town centre

Section 8.6 Walking and cycling routes

Appendix of Ongar Neighbourhood Plan- Projects and Actions. This proposes solutions for reducing congestion and HGVs in Chipping Ongar High Street and accommodating car parking for an increased Visitor economy, which is outside the remit of Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Policies.

## 8.5 Rationale: Infrastructure priorities

A variety of Infrastructure requirements for Ongar have been itemised to support new housing development in EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033. These cover utilities, highways, education, health, open space, community facilities and sports and leisure<sup>141</sup> and are supported by reports and evidence such as 4 Global reports etc. Many are categorised as critical or essential, whilst others are desirable. Where there is likely to be a choice of actual provision, or a choice of location, such as where to put a pre-school, Ongar Neighbourhood Plan has prioritised those that are likely to require contributions from more than one Developer, including via s 106 contributions, as the most beneficial overall. These priorities are supported by surveys conducted by ONPCG in the community<sup>142</sup>

NPPF Paragraph 34 deals with infrastructure contributions requiring Plans to set out the contributions expected from each development.

EFDC Playing pitch strategy (4 Global) 2018 v 7.0 (EB714) covers football, cricket, rugby and hockey in accordance with Sport England recognised assessments. The findings of the 4 Global report concludes that there will be a need for more football and rugby pitches. This echoes Ongar Sports Clubs call for the same and the Residents Survey. Consideration for an artificial grass pitch (AGP) has been called for, partly due to the heavy clay soils in Ongar which are subject to waterlogging during the winter months.

Sports provision played on courts, such netball, tennis and basketball, were not assessed by EFDC. There are tennis courts at Ongar Sports Club in Jubilee Park, but several have been lost at Ongar Leisure Centre as have netball courts. Netball, in particular, has strong support in Ongar but current facilities are not suitable for competition or year-round use. A MUGA (Multi Use Games Area)- being a pitch or court surface which can accommodate various sports would serve the community well.

EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033 Policy DM6 deals with designated and undesignated Open Spaces: It requires provision of open space in accordance with the guidance contained within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Open Space Strategy. Nationally adopted space standards will be used as a starting point for provision'. This includes play areas (LAPS, LEAPS and NEAPS). Ongar, despite surrounded by countryside, will have a need for more accessible 'Open Space' and a 'town park', which should be located centrally to benefit the whole community. Proposals have also been identified in Actions and Projects Appendix.

Another major requirement is a new pre-school (identified in EB 1101B EFDC Infrastructure Delivery Programme for Ongar). This should be located in or close to Chipping Ongar town centre. This would be equidistant to the two primary schools and have the added bonus of bringing more people into the town centre.

Where there is a choice, Ongar's preferences are for contributions towards amenities and facilities that would benefit the whole area rather than only a small estate.

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<sup>141</sup> EB1101B Infrastructure Delivery Schedule EFDC Evidence Base <https://www.efdclocalplan.org/local-plan/evidence-base/>

<sup>142</sup>See Residents Survey 2018 and other surveys in the Evidence files

## **Policy ONG-CT4: Infrastructure Priorities**

### **Policy ONG-CT4: Infrastructure Priorities**

Priorities for the provision of infrastructure through use of Section 106 or similar developer contributions are:

- **Additional sports pitches and courts including artificial grass pitches and MUGA courts;**
- **A new town park in close proximity of Chipping Ongar town centre and Ongar Castle;**
- **Pre-school provision in close proximity of Chipping Ongar town centre.**

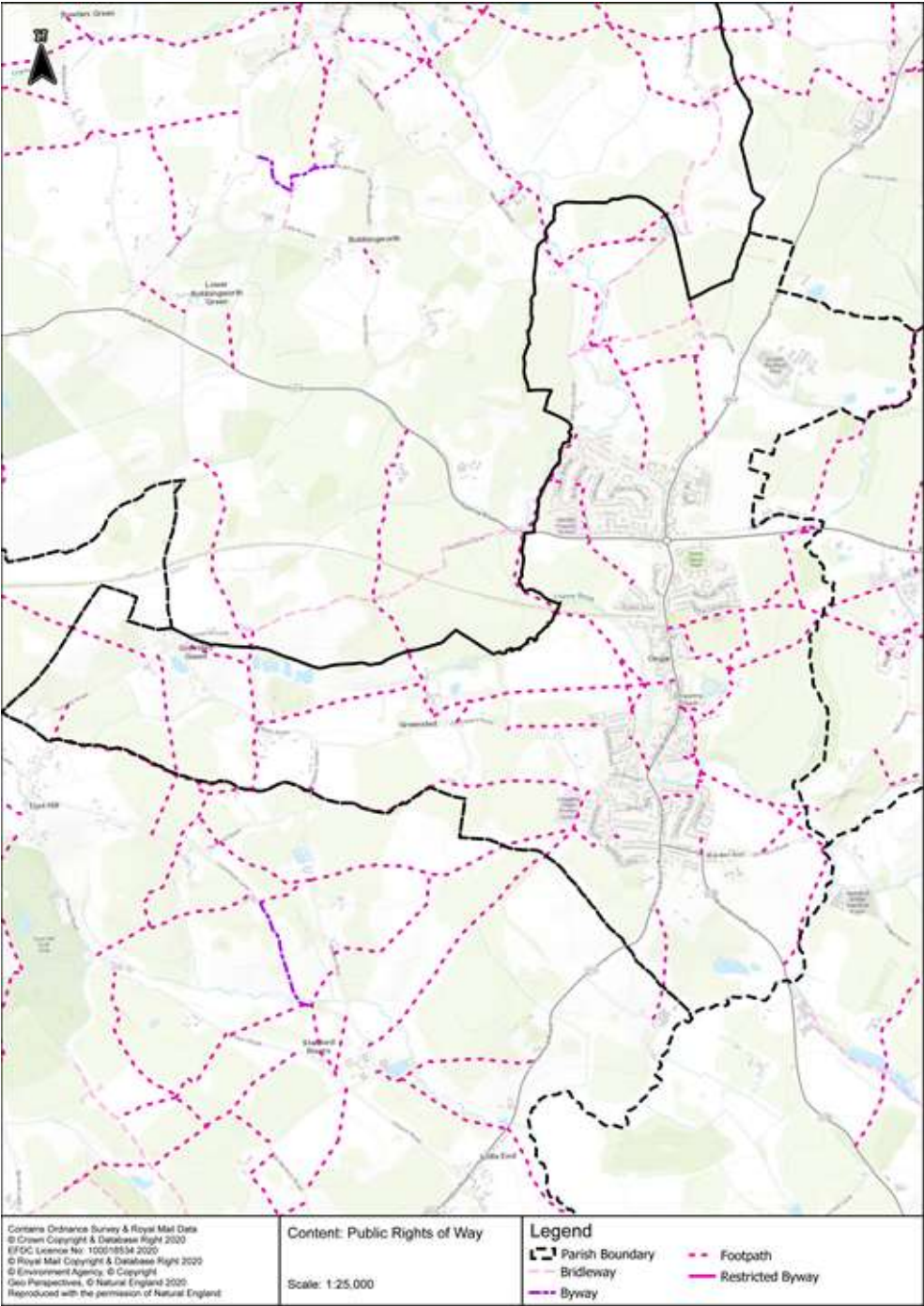
## **Interpretation of ONG-CT4**

The policy is intended to guide decisions by the Local Planning Authority with regard to use of financial contributions through Section 106 or subsequent developer contributions, whilst acknowledging that such matters relating to improvements to highways, education and utilities will take precedence. This may include land acquisition costs. EFDC's up to date Infrastructure Delivery Programme for Ongar will be expected to be used in conjunction with this Policy.

In accordance with the government's policies for greater decision making at local community level, the residents survey has confirmed the priorities in ONG-CT4. Better outcomes are likely to be achieved if the design process for new infrastructure involves meaningful engagement with local stakeholders and community groups in Ongar at pre application stage. Ongar Town Council will therefore be expected to be involved in decision making for s106 contributions ( or equivalent) from developers.

### 8.6 Rationale: Footpath and Cycle Routes

There are a number of footpaths linking parts of the civil parish with nearby settlements, and several long-distance footpaths passing through Chipping Ongar. In addition, there are some short cuts or alleyways through established housing estates to Chipping Ongar town centre.



*PROWs -footpaths through Ongar civil parish*



Roads through Ongar are busy, and many footways (pavements) are narrow. Therefore, to encourage more local journeys to be on foot or cycle, a more 'joined up' network of footpaths and cycle routes is needed. Furthermore, new development should ensure access onto existing footpaths, such as in the West Ongar Concept site R1 and R2, and where possible expand these routes.



There is a need for safe pedestrian crossings or refuge places along children's walking routes to school<sup>143</sup>. Pedestrian and cyclist shortcuts and improvements to paths within and around Ongar must be considered in the layout of new housing sites in order to encourage local journeys by foot or cycle.

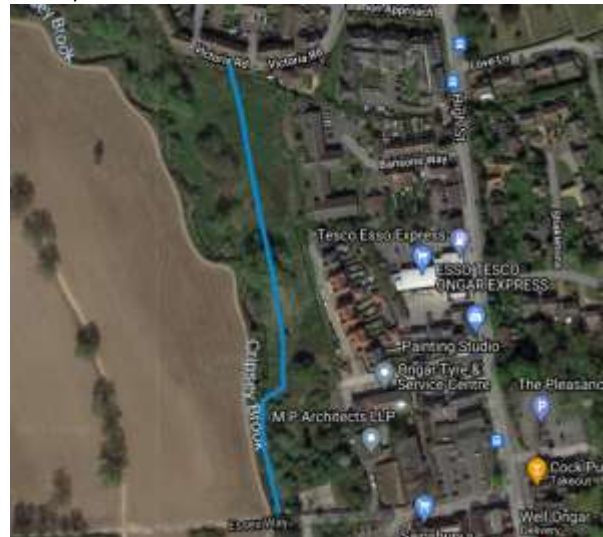
Supporting a better network of footpaths and cycling paths round Chipping Ongar and Shelley to encourage non-car local journeys could also open up the opportunity of providing an interesting selection of walks for visitors around the historic town. This could involve coordinating activities and signposting for the Heritage Railway, Greensted Church, long-distance footpaths of The Essex Way, St Peter's Way and Three Forests Way and other attractions, interactive Town trails, a Tourist

Information Point and the use of new technology for Wi-fi and 5G<sup>144</sup>. This could open up a new market for the local economy.

The reopening up of footpaths between the Cripsey Brook and the town from Basons Lane to the Heritage Railway has been proposed.<sup>145</sup> It would enable school children to avoid the busy High Street and encourage walking or cycling as a short cut.

See also Policy ONG-CT1 Local Greens Space LGS3 and ONP Projects and Actions to link round the west south and east of Chipping Ongar alongside the two rivers, including the Nature Reserve to form Green Corridors<sup>146</sup>.

*Properly signed and well-designed paths can provide good car free access to the town centre from new and existing developments*



*Google maps copyright Blue line showing proposed protected route for a cycle route and footpath ONG-CT5*

<sup>143</sup> See ONP Projects and Actions Appendix; and Risk Assessment for walking routes to Ongar schools including from proposed new development sites in Evidence files

<sup>144</sup> See ONP Projects and Actions Appendix

<sup>145</sup> See ONP Projects and Actions Appendix

<sup>146</sup> See ONP Projects and Actions Appendix and map

ONG-CT5 Street Map to show a protected route for a cycle route and footpath indicated by the blue line



This route would also link to the footpath from Bansons Lane to Millbank Avenue and new proposed estate in Greensted Road ONG-R5 (EFDC Local Plan).

Where new or existing footpaths go through built up areas, including alleyway shortcuts, urban design principles should include ensuring personal safety by avoiding enclosing footpaths between high enclosures with no natural surveillance. The use of Secured by Design Homes 2019 (official police security initiative) is recommended, as also detailed in National Design Guide and National Model Design Code 2021<sup>147</sup>

The NPPF and EFDC have Planning Policies and frameworks to support walking and cycling routes for healthy lifestyles and to encourage less reliance on motor vehicles. This includes: Paragraph 84, Paragraph 91, and Section 8 of the NPPF and EFDC Local Plan 2011-2033 Policy T1 Sustainable Transport Choices. Footpaths and cycle routes should be safe, pleasant and convenient with practical links onto adjoining public rights of way and cycleway networks.

In Ongar such a network would enable better connectivity within the civil parish, as well as better off road links to neighbouring villages. However, some may also need improved maintenance of surfaces and the reduction of overhanging vegetation on footpaths -PROWS and alleyways- to enable all year round use.

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<sup>147</sup> See Evidence file for details

See also ONP Projects and Actions which proposes a new permissive footpath along the banks of the river Roding, linking to Chipping Ongar town centre through existing PROWS. Opportunities to boost the local economy could follow.

## **Policy ONG-CT5: Footpaths and Cycle Route**

### **Policy ONG-CT5: Footpaths and Cycle Route**

- 1. New development must enhance or have no detrimental impact on the accessibility, safety and amenity of existing footpaths and footways. This includes:**
  - a) Not encroaching onto footpath routes;**
  - b) Avoiding flanking footpaths with high enclosures or blank walls;**
  - c) Retaining an open or partially open setting to footpaths;**
  - d) Ensuring that the layout within development provides access points to adjacent footpaths;**
  - e) Providing low-level landscaping adjacent to footpaths.**
- 2. The west of Ongar route shown on accompanying map ONG-CT5 is protected to allow the provision of a new cycleway and footpath. Development must not compromise the route of the proposed cycleway and footpath. Development flanking the route should take account of the above requirements for existing footpaths.**
- 3. Access from new developments to new footpaths or PROWs will be encouraged, especially if they link into existing networks or semi natural green space.**

## **Interpretation of ONG-CT5**

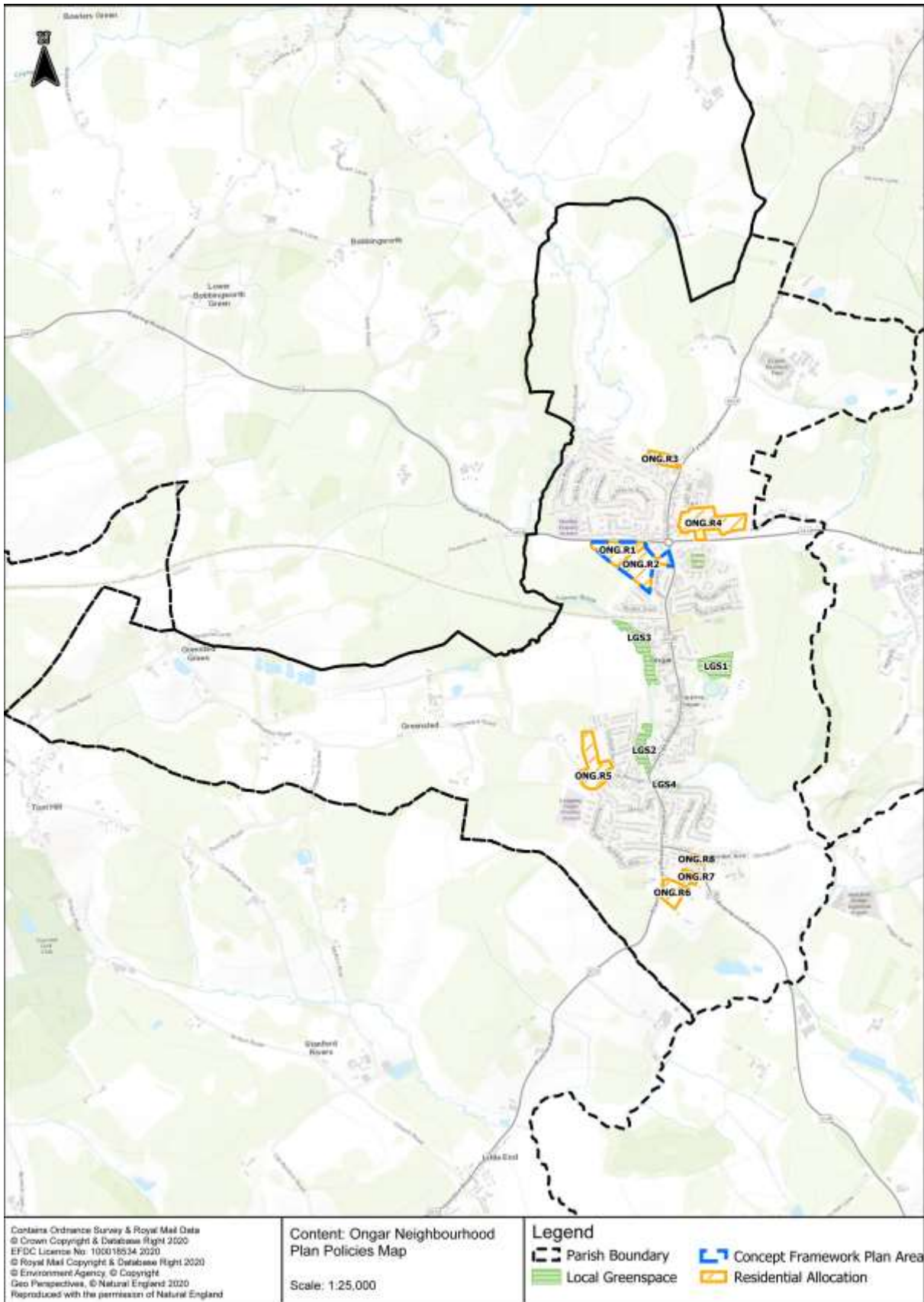
The policy requires careful consideration of impacts of all development in Ongar on footpaths (footways adjacent to roads and also PROWs<sup>148</sup>). Design and access statements provide an opportunity for developers to explain how compliance with the policy has been achieved, and enables new footpaths to be beneficial for Visitor economy and reducing dependency of cars for local journeys.

See also Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Appendix Projects and Actions

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<sup>148</sup> PROW stands for Public Rights of Way

# Policy Map



# Further Guidance from Environment Agency, Thames Water, National Grid and Essex County Council

## Environment Agency

The relevance of the designation and the potential implication upon development proposals should be considered with reference to Groundwater Protection guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/groundwater-protection>

### Main River Water Quality

The Cripsey Brook watercourse (Water Framework Directive ID: GB106037033481) and the Upper Roding watercourse (Water Framework Directive ID: GB106037033500) run through the neighbourhood plan area.

Developments within or adjacent to these watercourses should not cause further deterioration and should seek to improve the water quality based on the recommendations of the Thames River Basin Management Plan. An assessment of the potential impacts of the neighbourhood plan on this watercourse under WFD should be included within the SEA appraisal. Further information on the current status of this watercourse can be found on Catchment Data Explorer here:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/>

### Aquifers

The plan includes areas which are located on Secondary A Bedrock and Superficial Aquifers. The relevance of the designation and the potential implication upon development proposals should be considered with reference to our Groundwater Protection guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/groundwater-protection>

## Thames Water

Developers are encouraged to contact Thames Water as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential wastewater network reinforcement requirements and to allow upgrades to Stansted Rivers Sewage Treatment Works to be programmed. Developments will be required to comply with Policy DM18 of the Epping Forest Local Plan in relation to wastewater infrastructure. Where there is a capacity constraint, phasing conditions should be applied to any approval where appropriate to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development.

Developers can liaise with Thames Water in advance of the submission of any planning applications through the use of their pre-planning service at: [www.thameswater.co.uk](http://www.thameswater.co.uk)

## National Grid

National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (NGET) owns and maintains the electricity transmission system in England and Wales. National Grid Gas plc (NGG) owns and operates the high-pressure gas transmission system across the UK. Please remember to consult National Grid on any Neighbourhood Plan Documents or site-specific proposals that could affect their assets.

## Essex County Council

ECC is the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for the area covered by the Plan. See Essex Minerals Local Plan (MLP) (2014) and the Essex and Southend-on Sea Waste Local Plan (WLP) (2017) These set out framework and policies which safeguard known mineral bearing land and mineral and waste infrastructure. Parts of Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Area have sand and gravel deposits in the safeguarding area and should be referenced accordingly in planning applications.

## Acknowledgments

The neighbourhood plan steering group Ongar, being the committee of Neighbourhood Plan Community Group, would like to record their thanks for the considerable assistance, cooperation, encouragement and patience of

- Supporters of Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group committee, who included experts and professionals in Town Planning, Engineering, Retail, Surveying, Architecture, Local History, Historic Environment, Ecology, Education, Sports and Recreational Facilities, Health and others who helped with research, IT and clerical aspects- many of whom are local residents
- RCCE
- The residents, business owners, landowners, Community groups, Church groups of the civil parish of Ongar
- Ongar Health Centre
- Local School Headteachers
- Roy Strutt Photography
- Ongar sports clubs
- Ongar Town Councillors and Officers
- Epping Forest District Council Officers and Councillors
- Essex County Council Officers and Councillors
- MP for Brentwood and Ongar (Alex Burghart)

