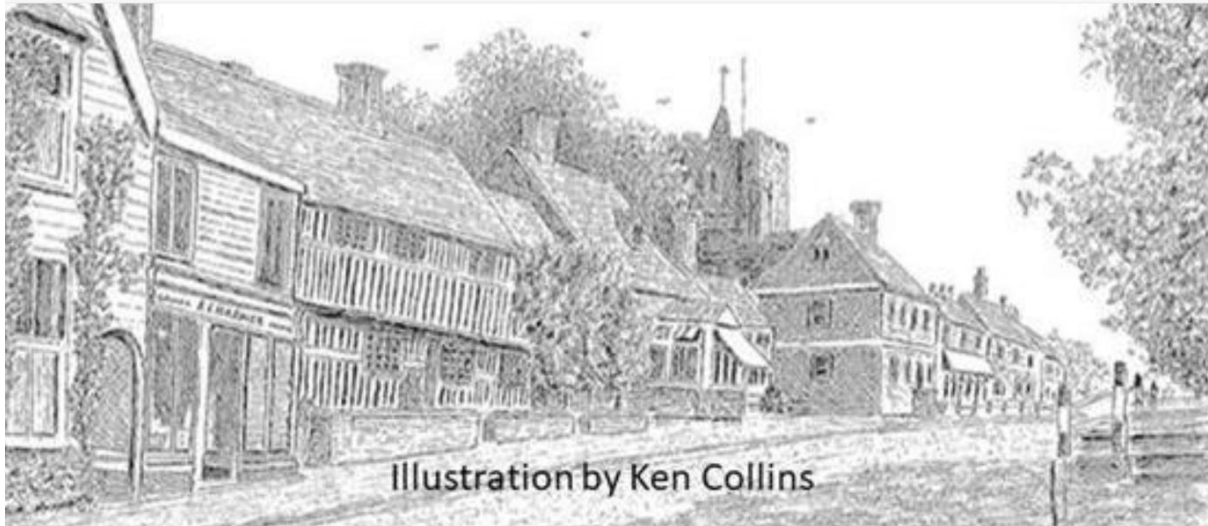


Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan 2024 to 2038



Consultation Statement

April 2026

**Prepared by the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering
Group on behalf of Staplehurst Parish Council**

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The policies contained in the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) 2024 to 2038 have been developed following extensive interaction and consultation with the local community.
- 1.2. This Consultation Statement sets out how the SNP has been developed and contains, in accordance with Regulation 14 of Neighbourhood Development Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended):
 - details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
 - details as to how they were consulted;
 - a summary of the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
 - how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.

About the Plan

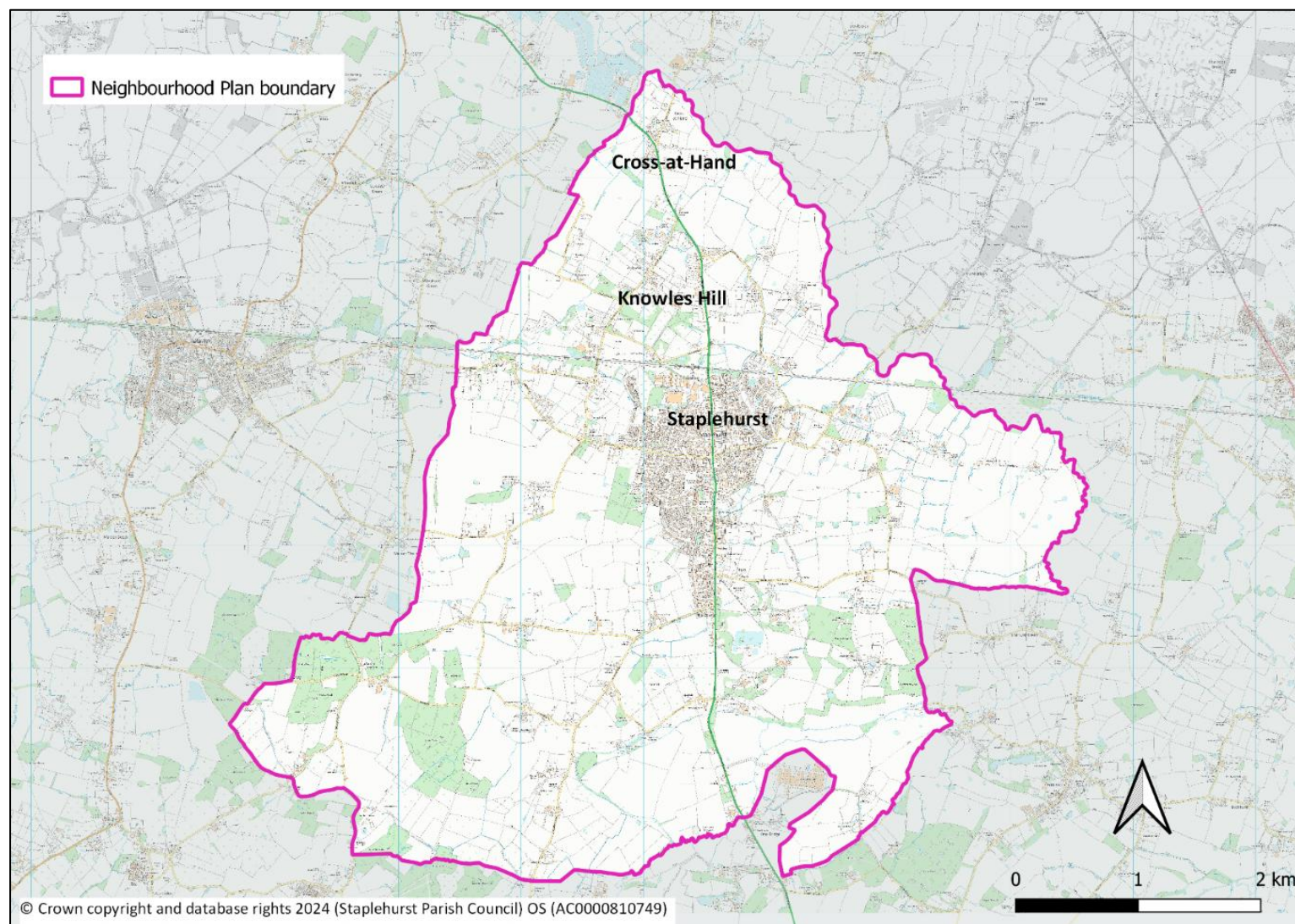
- 1.3. The Submission Version SNP covers the period 2024 to 2038. If successfully made, it will replace the SNP 2016 to 2031.
- 1.4. It sets out Planning and land-use policy for the Parish of Staplehurst (*Figure 1*).
- 1.5. The Local Planning Authority Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) designated the Neighbourhood Area on 14 January 2019.
- 1.6. Staplehurst Parish Council is the qualifying body for the SNP.

The Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan Review Group

- 1.7. Staplehurst Parish Council is the qualifying body officially responsible for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. Following the adoption of the SNP 2016 to 2031, a Review Group was set up comprising local councillors and volunteers from the community to monitor the Plan and its application. It is this group that has overseen the review of the SNP.
- 1.8. Membership of the Review Group is:

Chair:	Cllr Margaret Arger
Secretary:	Robin Oakley (Resident)
Members:	Cllr Richard Ash, Mrs Joan Buller, Cllr John Perry, Dr Richard Smith, Mr Tom Burnham, Mr Colin Love, Cllr Bill McLaughlin, Cllr Adele Sharp
Consultant:	Alison Eardley (Planning Consultant)
- 1.9. The [Terms of Reference](#) for the Review Group can be found on the Parish Council website along with the [minutes for the Review Group](#) meetings.

Figure 1: Map showing the neighbourhood area



2 SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES, ISSUES AND OUTCOMES

2.1. A high-level summary of the steps involved in development the SNP is shown in *Table 1*:

Table 1: High level summary of the key milestones

Date	Milestone	Key activities
2023	Parish Council agree to review the Neighbourhood Plan	- Steering Group established - Evidence gathering commenced
2024	Evidence and engagement	- Health-check review of existing SNP is undertaken - Community Survey issued - Housing Needs Survey completed - Evidence gathering and further community engagement - Residents' Survey completed - Open presentation at Community Centre for residents to offer views on emerging plan - SEA/HRA Screening prepared
2025 to 2026	Pre-Submission Version (Regulation 14) Plan published Regulation 16 Plan published Examination Referendum	- Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) consultation - Plan amended appropriately into Submission Version and submitted, with supporting documents to MBC - Regulation 16 consultation run by MBC Plan independently examined - Plan finalised for Referendum Plan 'made' and forming part of the strategic development plan

2.2. The sections below describe, in fuller detail, the engagement and consultation process which took place during the Plan preparation. This is divided into three stages:

Stage I: Preparing the Pre-Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan

Stage II: Consulting on the Pre-Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan

Stage III: Finalising the Submission Neighbourhood Plan

Stage I: Preparing the Pre-Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan Review

- 2.3. The first SNP was made (adopted) on 7 December 2016 and updated on 6 August 2020. It is used along with the Maidstone Local Plan Review to determine planning applications within the Parish of Staplehurst.
- 2.4. Staplehurst Parish Council (SPC) has successfully used the policies of the SNP when commenting on Planning applications in the Parish.
- 2.5. It was in July 2021 that the Review Group first discussed the idea of review the SNP. This was due to a number of reasons:
- national policy had changed fairly significantly since the Plan was made, with updates to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the introduction of other legislation, for instance the Environment Act 2021.
 - there was a desire, locally, to review the scope of the SNP to cover areas not included in the made Plan.
 - the emerging Maidstone Local Plan Review was reaching its final stages (before adoption in March 2024)
- 2.6. Over the course of 2021 to 2023, members of the Review Group took responsibility for looking at the SNP policies and considered whether they needed to be revised. They also considered whether any new policies should be added. The [meeting minutes](#) provide detailed updates about the work undertaken during this initial phase of the review. By Autumn 2023, an early version had been drafted. This new version sought to modify some existing policies, add some new policies and retain others with no change. A summary of the changes at this initial stage is provided in *Table 2*.

Table 2: Overview of proposed changes to the SNP 2016 to 2031

Policies Modified	New Policies	Policies with no change
PW1	H7	PW4
PW2	H8	E1
PW3	H9	H1
C1	H10	H2
C2		H3
C3		H4
C4		H5

- 2.7. The early version modified document was sent to Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and in January 2024, MBC officers wrote to the Parish Council with the outcome of their review. The findings set out, for each emerging policy, whether it conformed to the then adopted Local Plan (2011-2031), whether it conformed to the then emerging Local Plan (2021-2038) and

- whether it constituted a minor, material examination or material referendum amendment. They also provided a commentary on the draft policies. The findings are shown in Appendix A.
- 2.8. While MBC was preparing their review of the modified document, SPC decided to contract the support of an independent planning consultant. This consultant was appointed in early 2024. They were sent a copy of the early version modified SNP along with the comments received from MBC. An initial task undertaken by the consultant was to review the early version and, in conjunction with the MBC comments, recommend how to take the document forward into a set of policy options to take to the local community for engagement.
 - 2.9. A copy of the slide set of recommendations prepared by the consultant for a meeting with the Steering Group is contained in Appendix B. It was clear that some work was needed to ensure that the new SNP was in conformity with Local Plan policy and also responded to needs of the community.
 - 2.10. In parallel with this, the Parish Council had commissioned a Housing Needs Survey for the Parish to be undertaken. This was published in March 2024 and would help to underpin one of the housing policies in the emerging SNP Review.
 - 2.11. In addition, the Parish Council issued a Residents' Survey in early 2024, to gain feedback on a range of issues, some of which would be relevant to the emerging Neighbourhood Plan (Figure 2). Respondents had until April 2024 to respond and were incentivised with a prize draw.

Figure 2: Extract from the Resident's Survey, 2024



Staplehurst Residents Survey 2024

We want to better understand what matters most to you!

CLOSING DATE 8TH APRIL 2024

Would you like to win £100 shopping voucher complete our survey and provide your details at the end to be in with a chance to win 1 of 3 x £100 shopping vouchers for residents.

SCAN THE CODE TO START

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL
Parish Office, High Street
TN12 0BJ, Tel: 01580 891761
Email: admin@staplehurst-pc.uk

Hard copies are available in the Spring Village Update or from the Parish Office.

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL RESIDENTS' SURVEY 2024

Dear Resident,
Staplehurst Parish Council is the first tier of local government in our area. We work closely with Maidstone Borough, Kent County Council and with services such as the Health Service or Environment Agency on your behalf. This means that we are at the heart of our local community and are here to reflect our resident's views and priorities and to lobby on your behalf on matters affecting Staplehurst.

The Parish Council provides a range of services; the nature reserve at Wimpey Field; Jubilee Field sports pitches/skatepark; Bell Lane public toilets; Christmas Lights; CCTV coverage of key areas of the village; provide local community grants and promote local events. For further information on "who does what in Staplehurst" visit the Council website <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/who-does-what-in-staplehurst/> or Staplehurst Library or Parish Office.

Staplehurst Parish Council wants to hear your views and priorities. We would really appreciate it if you could complete this survey and encourage everyone in your household to contribute. It is important to get the views from across the whole community: young and old, singles and families, local workers and commuters so that we better understand what matters most to you. It will provide real meaningful evidence to help inform the shape of services in Staplehurst, the next Neighbourhood Plan and the Parish Council to lobby on your behalf.

The Residents Survey should only take a few minutes of your time. You can also request additional paper copies of the survey by contacting the Parish Office or complete an on-line survey – www.staplehurst-pc.uk

Please use extra paper to expand on answers. The results of the survey will be reported to the Parish Council and published in the Village Update and online.

Prize/draw

There is a prize draw, 3 x £100 shopping vouchers for residents.

To enter the prize draw, complete the form at the end of the survey.

All information will be held in line with the UK - General Data Protection Regulations of Staplehurst Parish Council. This means any report will be anonymised, the data will only be used for this project and then destroyed after 18 months. For further information visit www.staplehurst-pc.uk

LIFE IN AND AROUND STAPLEHURST

Q1. What do you like the most about living in Staplehurst:
Please place numbers in each box, ranking your choices in order of personal preference, where the **lowest number** is the **most important** to you.
E.g. '1' = most important, '2' = second most important, etc.

- ☐ A vibrant civic centre with a good range of shops and hospitality
- ☐ Transport links
- ☐ Access to community facilities
- ☐ Sense of community
- ☐ Good schools
- ☐ Access to London
- ☐ Access to green spaces / open countryside
- ☐ Shared ownership housing (affordable)
- ☐ Employment / Business opportunities
- ☐ A safe place to live and work.
- ☐ Other – please explain below.

Q2. Thinking about the community facilities and services are there any you think Staplehurst Parish Council could provide:

YOUR PRIORITIES FOR LOCAL SERVICES

Q3. What ONE thing do you think Staplehurst Parish Council could be doing better?
Please only choose **ONE** option from the list.

- ☐ More grant funding for local organisations
- ☐ More community events
- ☐ More Civic events
- ☐ Improve the way the council communicates.
- ☐ More services/facilities for young people
- ☐ Improved representation with other levels of government

Please provide more details about your answer:

- 2.12. The feedback from the Resident's Survey combined with feedback from the consultant to the recommendations, enabled the Steering Group to put together a second early version SNP in Spring 2024.
- 2.13. A public event was held in June 2024 to share the work to date with the local community and to gain feedback on the emerging policy areas. This provided an opportunity to gain input into

the evidence base being gathered to support some of the proposed new policies, for instance a Local Green Space policy, a Significant Views policy and a non-designated heritage assets policy.

- 2.14. The event was promoted via social media, the Village Magazine, the Parish Council mailing list, via posters (*Figure 3*) and word of mouth.

Figure 3: July Public event poster

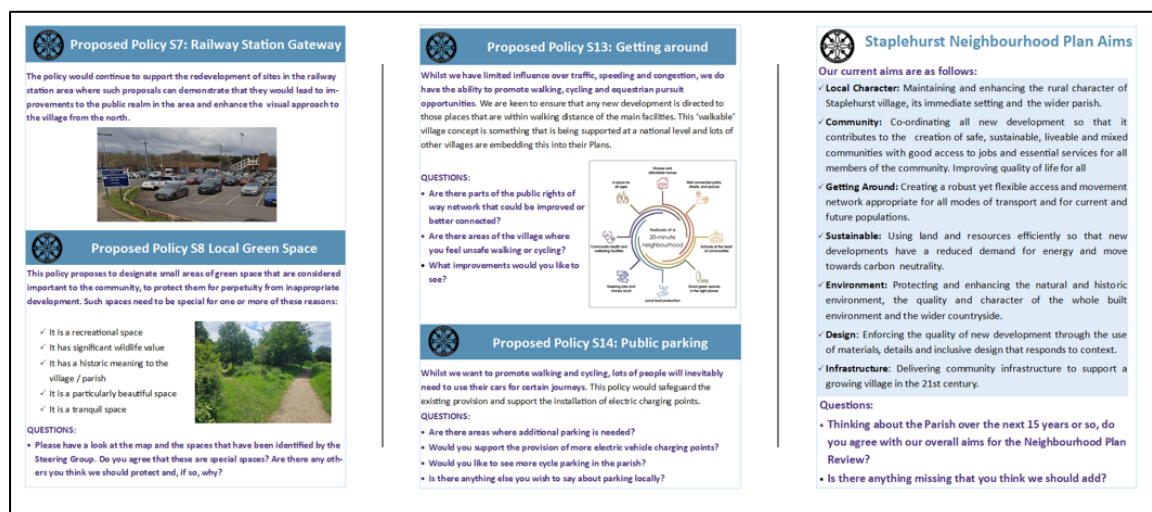


- 2.15. The event was fairly well attended. There was a presentation viewable explaining the purpose of the neighbourhood plan and the reasons for reviewing it. Display materials relating to proposed policy areas were positioned around the room with attendees encouraged to provide their views using post it notes.

Figure 4: Images from the public engagement event



Figure 5: Examples of the posters displayed with questions



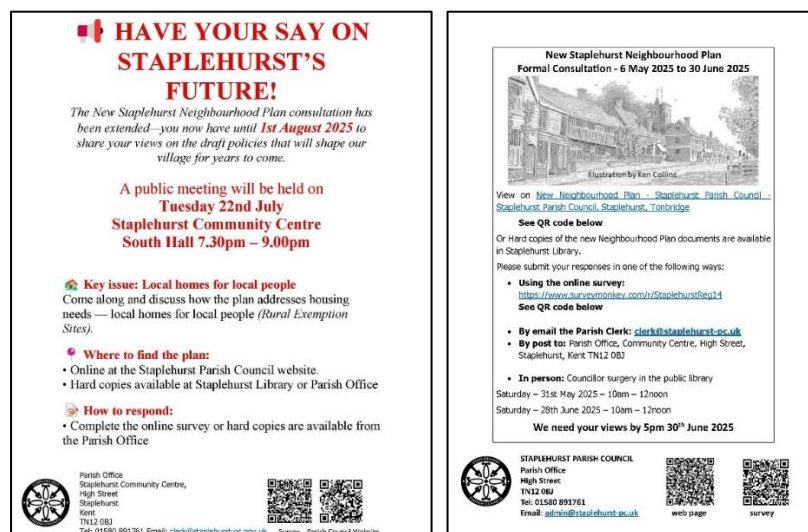
- 2.16. The feedback from the event was collated by the Review Group, each of whom had taken responsibility for a particular policy area.
- 2.17. The group spent the next few months finalising the evidence base for the Plan Review. This was done in conjunction with local groups where possible. For instance, the new policy around walking and cycling involved engagement with the local walking group. Comments received from the public engagement event and the Community Survey led the group to review their overarching vision and objectives. This is aligned with the overarching vision for Staplehurst Parish Council.
- 2.18. By Autumn 2024, the scope of the Plan had been largely drafted, with just some additional evidence still left to gather. It was at this point that the Plan was sent to MBC Officers both to screen the document for environmental purposes and to undertake an internal health check of it before it progressed to the first formal round of consultation.
- 2.19. The health check revealed some minor areas for improvements to the document, which were integrated, alongside finalising the last pieces of evidence. To aid this, a Mapping Workshop was held in the Community Centre to finalise the local green space list and the local views. During this time, updates on progress were placed in the Village Magazine.
- 2.20. In terms of scope, the Modification Statement provides a commentary about policies that were retained, policies which were removed and new policies added. Of particular note, the Review has sought to retain those policies / policy clauses that were considered to be working well locally. The overall look and feel of the document has been refreshed and the number of policies consolidated from 19 into a set of 16 overall. Particular work has gone into gathering evidence to underpin the new policies including:
- 2.21. **A Housing Needs Survey for the Parish:** This was published in mid 2024 and underpins Policy S2 (Meeting Local Housing Needs). It was based on a Parish-wide survey exploring local housing need and also built upon the strategic work undertaken at the wider Borough level.
- 2.22. **Character and design work:** Much of the core of the village sits within a conservation area. This was extended by MBC and the findings have been reflected in the SNP.

- 2.23. **Identifying non-designated heritage assets:** The Review Group undertook a great deal of work to identify important historic assets in the Parish that were not protected by way of a national listing. As a new policy, this was informed by local walkabouts, the public event and the Mapping Workshop.
- 2.24. **Engaging Network Rail:** The existing policy relating to the Railway Station Gateway area was retained. The Parish Council has an ongoing dialogue with Network Rail, which has informed the justification to the policy.
- 2.25. **Local Green Spaces:** The previous SNP did not identify Local Green Spaces, and this was considered to be a gap in the work. The Review Group undertook an audit of spaces in the Parish and shared a long list, with maps and descriptions, at the public event for comment. The details were further refined at the mapping workshop.
- 2.26. **Locally significant views:** As with the Local Green Spaces, the Review Group undertook an initial audit based on their own experiences of living in the Parish, information gained from promotional leaflets and walkabouts. The footpath group was asked to nominate particular views they felt to be significant. All material was presented at the public events for comment and further refining.

Stage II: Consulting on the Pre-Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.27. The Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) consultation took place between 6 May 2025 December to 30 June 2025. This was extended to 1 August to allow for the summer holidays. The consultation was publicised in the following ways:
- The SNP website was updated to include all the relevant documents.
 - Hard copies of plan were made available, for instance at the library and via the Parish Council office, to be viewed by individuals.
 - A Feedback Survey was provided, both online and paper copy, allowing residents to provide their thoughts on the individual policies, the design guidance and any other aspects they wished to comment. Paper copies could be returned to various locations around the Parish.
 - A promotional poster was prepared with links to the website and survey. This was distributed at locations around the neighbourhood area.
 - Two public drop-in events were organised, hosted by the Steering Group. These coincided with the regular Councillor Surgeries and were held in the library. A public meeting was also held on the 22 July with a presentation about the review and opportunities for people to feedback or take away surveys.
 - Information was included in the Staplehurst Parish Council Annual Report. Articles were published in the Village Magazine and information was published on social media.

Promotional posters



2.28. Towards the end of the consultation period, the Review Group was approached by MBC to request that a further document be published at this Pre-Submission stage. This was the Modifications Statement, which summarises how the current Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan has been amended as part of the review process. It also sets out the extent of the modifications, which are considered to be significant enough to warrant a further examination and referendum. To that end, SPC again extended the consultation period to 26 September to allow for feedback on this new document. During that period, they continued to accept comments on the Pre-Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan itself.

Figure 6: Village Magazine article promoting the consultation extension



- An email (and later reminder emails) was sent to the SNP mailing list, the local business mailing list and other interested parties.
- Statutory consultees were written to directly, informed by a list of contacts provided by MBC.
- The owners of the proposed Local Green Spaces.

- 2.29. A list of the statutory consultees contacted is contained in Appendix C and responses were received from the following:
- Maidstone Borough Council
 - Kent County Council
 - Historic England
 - Natural England
 - National Highways
 - Lichfields obo Barrett David Wilson Homes – Land at Headcorn Road
 - Lichfields obo Barrett David Wilson Homes – Land at Baldwins Farm
 - NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board
 - JAG Watson
 - Network Rail
 - Trustee of Dawkins Trust
 - Surveymonkey responses (55 responses from residents)
 - Southern Water (comments recorded within the Survey Monkey comments)
 - CBRE on behalf of Wates Developments
- 2.30. Representations received at the Pre-Submission Consultation were recorded by topic/policy and carefully considered by Steering Committee members. A summary of the comments and responses from the Steering Committee, are set out in Appendix D. Full copies of the responses have been sent to MBC. The Modification Statement, which accompanies the Submission Version Plan provides a commentary about the new policies added to the Plan, those retained and those amended. The following paragraphs provide a summary, by topic area, of the comments received during the Regulation 14 consultation and how these were integrated into the Submission Version SNP 2024-2038. Where support is provided in percentages, this refers to the feedback from the Surveymonkey representations.
- 2.31. **General comments:** Overall, the comments were very supportive of the Plan and its scope. Conformity references have been updated to align to the National Planning Policy Framework updated in December 2024.
- 2.32. The SNP has been reviewed to ensure that it meets accessibility requirements.
- 2.33. A number of amendments were made to the section introducing the Parish, to rectify some factual errors.
- 2.34. **Spatial Strategy and housing:** Policy S1 (Location of development) was supported by 80% of residents. It was amended very slightly for clarity purposes. Some respondents emphasised the importance of ensuring that new development is appropriately supported by adequate infrastructure. MBC noted that the policy introduces a need to restrict coalescence between the individual settlements that make up the Parish, to help retain their distinctive identities. Some respondent comments related to allocations in the Local Plan, which are beyond the scope of the SNP. Policy S2 (Meeting Local Housing Needs) remained largely as drafted at Regulation 14 and was supported by 79% of residents. It is considered to be flexible as emphasised by some respondents. Residents particularly supported the need for smaller (for downsizing/ family homes) homes and more affordable homes.

- 2.35. **Character, heritage and design:** Policy S3 (Character and design of development) was supported by 80% of respondents to the survey. The policy makes reference to the updated Conservation Area Appraisal for Staplehurst and the key design principles as set out in Appendix B of the document. There was a query about the use of the wording 'adversely impact' in relation to traffic generation, which has been amended to 'severely impact' in accordance with national policy. In addition, mention has been made of the Manual for Streets 2 in terms of street design.
- 2.36. Policy S4 (Energy efficiency and sustainable design) was supported by 86% of residents. A new clause (viii) has been added in relation to the use of multifunctional SuDS on the advice of Southern Water. A new paragraph has been added to the justification in relation to the capacity at the Staplehurst Water Treatment site. This has resulted in water shortages in the area in recent weeks.
- 2.37. Policy S5 (Renewable and community energy) received support from 78% of respondents. It received little direct comment.
- 2.38. Policy S6 (Conserving heritage assets) received support from 89% of respondents, with two supportive comments.
- 2.39. **Local economy and village centre:** Policy S7 (Vibrant village centre) amalgamated existing policies and expanded on this. It was supported by 85% of respondents with few changes required.
- 2.40. Policy S8 (Railway Station Gateway Area) remained largely as drafted in the original plan. 78% of respondents supported the policy. Comments were received from Network Rail and these have been integrated into this section.
- 2.41. **Environment and green space:** The new Local Green Space policy (S9) received 87% support. There was correspondence received from the owners of the Golf Club to enable the mapping for that space to be reviewed and the wording tightened. Policy S10 (Biodiversity, landscape and environment) was supported by 93% of respondents. Comments were largely positive in terms of safeguarding local biodiversity, and a new clause was added in relation to retaining front gardens for wildlife purposes. Explicit reference has been made to the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Network, which was published in November 2025. Policy S11 (Significant local views) received support from 82% of respondents. One respondent (obo a landowner) raised concerns about the evidence underpinning the views. They suggested that a number of views crossed their client's land interests. The Review Group considered the comment carefully but note that the NPPF actively encourages communities to identify the characteristics of a place that make it special. The views have been determined by the community via local consultation including the community survey, the public event and the mapping workshop. The policy does not preclude development but stipulates that development should be designed in a way to retain, where practicably, views.
- 2.42. As a new policy, Policy S12 (Dark Skies) was supported by 84% of respondents. It has had minor amendments for clarity purposes.
- 2.43. **Transport and Movement:** Policy S13 (Sustainable travel opportunities) received 89% support from residents. Its title has been renamed for clarity purposes. The policy and

supporting text have been amended slightly following on from comments received including enhanced reference to public transport and the Healthy Streets principles. Reference to the Air Quality Management Area has been removed as this is no longer in place. Policy S14 (Publicly accessible parking) was supported by 86% of respondents. MBC raised a concern about this policy suggesting that it was not in conformity with the adopted Local Plan. In response, the Review Group consider that in relation to Clause A, the findings of the consultation identified a particular concern about the availability of public car parking locally, notably that which serves the village core. In a rural area such as Staplehurst, there is inevitably a high reliance on cars. Notwithstanding the emphasis to improve 'active travel' opportunities, as supported in SNP Policy S13, improving transport choice should therefore include provision of space to allow for car users. Bell Lane is the only public car park close to the village centre, serving the village core as well as other assets in the vicinity such as the church. There is no other public car parking nearby. Any future development of a multi storey car park at the railway station would not be suitable to all users wishing to access the village centre. Bell Lane is the only car park in this part of the village. The Review Group would support the car park being nominated as an ACV and this is to be pursued by the Parish Council.

- 2.44. **Community facilities:** Policy S15 (Important community, cultural, sport and recreational facilities) received 95% support from residents, reflecting its importance locally. Some amendments to Table 4 have been made to update information and correct factual inaccuracies. Policy S16 (Allotments and community growing spaces) received 81% support. Part B has been amended following on from comments received from MBC to set out more clearly the tests that need to be met in the case of an allotment space being lost or redeveloped.
- 2.45. Minor amendments to the Policies Maps and final section have been made.

Stage IV: Finalising the Submission Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.46. Following the changes made to the SNP because of the Regulation 14 consultation, the Submission Version plan was formally submitted to MBC who, once satisfied that the correct set of documents have been received, will undertake the Regulation 16 consultation. The document will then proceed to Examination and, assuming a favourable outcome, to referendum.

3 CONCLUSION

- 3.1. The Steering Committee has engaged and consulted thoroughly in order to develop the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan (Review). It has evolved a comprehensive vision and objectives and guiding principles for the Parish. In developing the policies to achieve the vision and objectives, the Group has engaged with a wide range of stakeholders and the Plan has been amended accordingly.
- 3.2. Feedback from the Regulation 14 consultation has enabled the Plan to be shaped into its final version, to submit to MBC.
- 3.3. This report fulfils the requirements for the Consultation Statement, set out in Regulation 15(2) of the Neighbourhood Development Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 3.4. Gratitude is extended to everybody who has contributed to the Plan's development, either as a valued member of the Steering Group or as someone who has taken the time to contribute their views and opinions. This has been invaluable in helping to shape the scope and content of the review of the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan.

APPENDIX A: MBC REVIEW OF THE EARLY VERSION NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW

Appendix saved as a separate document.

APPENDIX B: REVIEW OF THE PLAN BY THE INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT

Appendix saved as a separate document.

APPENDIX C: LIST OF THOSE CONSULTED AT REGULATION 14 (PRE-SUBMISSION STAGE)

In addition to residents, the following statutory organisations were contacted by the Parish Council:

Organisation
Maidstone Planning
Tunbridge Wells Planning
Kent County Council (Planning)
KCC (Rights of Way)
KCC Flooding and Drainage
East Sussex CC (Planning)
KCC (Historic Environment Record Manager, Planning & Environment Division)
KCC (Heritage Conservation Manager and County Archaeologist, Planning and Environment)
Director of Property & Infrastructure
Sustainable Communities Project Officer (Kent Adult Social Services – West Kent)
Social Care Health and Wellbeing, Strategic Commissioning (Accommodation Solutions)
(The Coal Authority)
Homes England
Natural England
Environment Agency
Historic England
Network Rail
National Highways
(Marine Management Organisation)
Water supplier (SE)
Sewers (Southern)
Gas (SGN)
Electric (UK Power Networks)
National Grid
BT
NHS West Kent CCG
Adjoining Parish councils:
Frittenden
Cranbrook & Sissinghurst
Goudhurst
Marden
Boughton Monchelsea
Chart Sutton
Sutton Valence
Headcorn

Local Green Spaces:

Site	Owner
LGS1: Village Golf Club and Playing Field	Privately owned
LGS2: Hen and Duckhurst Allotments	SPC
LGS3: Jenkins Way, Pond and Walkway	Dickens Gate Management Company Ltd
LGS4: Dickens Gate - Wildlife Area	Dickens Gate Management Company Ltd
LGS5: Dickens Gate – The Meadow	Dickens Gate Management Company Ltd
LGS6: Dickens Gate – central space	Dickens Gate Management Company Ltd
LGS7: Greenhill playground and open space	Dickens Gate Management Company Ltd
LGS8: Tomlin Close/ North Down	MBC
LGS9: Jeffery Close Green Space	MBC
LGS10: North Down Green Space	MBC
LGS11: Jeffery Close/ Oliver Road Green Space	MBC
LGS12: Stanley Close Green Space	MBC
LGS13: Pope Drive/ Reeves Close Green Space	MBC
LGS14: Land between Chestnut Avenue and High Street	SPC
LGS15: Surrenden Field	MBC
LGS16: Bathurst Road Green Spaces	KCC/MBC (MBC record suggests that this stops at 105 Bathurst Rd)
LGS17: Oliver Road Nature Reserve	SPC/ Friends of Wimpey Fields
LGS18: Bell Lane Nature Reserve	MBC
LGS19: Church Green	Golding Homes
LGS20: All Saints' Church Yard and Church Yard extension	Diocese of Canterbury, Dale Mummery (Property)
LGS21: Cricket and Tennis Club	Privately owned
LGS22: Parisfield Close Green Space	Parisfield management company limited
LGS23: Youth Club Green Space	KCC but SPC buying
LGS24: Staple Drive Play Area	Bdw Trading Limited
LGS25: Slaney Road Green Space	MBC
LGS26: Ponytell Pond and surrounds cluster (a, b and c)	MBC
LGS27: Area of trees and shrubs at junction of Weld Close and Slaney Road	Bdw Trading Limited

LGS28: Long Strakes ponds (a and b)	Part owned by Bovis but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents/ part owned by Redrow but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents
LGS29: Play Area between Staple Drive and Ponytell Road	MBC
LGS30: Jubilee Field	SPC
LGS31: Open space to the east of Tyler Road	Currently Bovis but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents
LGS32: Green space alongside Long Strakes and Jull Close	Currently Bovis but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents
LGS33: End of Long Strakes beside Fishers Road open space	Currently Bovis but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents
LGS34: Railway Line ponds Green Space	Currently Redrow but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents on the development.
LGS35: Green Space near railway line	Currently Redrow but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents on the development.
LGS36: Land at bottom of George Smith Close	Currently Redrow but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents on the development.
LGS37: Great Thread	Currently Redrow but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents on the development.
LGS38: Brisley Brook	Currently Redrow but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents on the development.
LGS39: Long Strakes Green Space	Currently Bovis but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents
LGS40: Long Strakes Play Area	Currently Bovis but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents
LGS41: Green Space adjacent to Slade Drive	Currently Redrow and Bovis but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents on each development.
LGS42: Great Threads ponds	Currently Redrow but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents on the development.
LGS43: Little Threads	Currently Redrow but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents on the development.
LGS44: Footpath from Great Threads to Little Threads	Currently Redrow but will be owned by the ManCo for the residents on the development.

APPENDIX D: SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED AT PRE-SUBMISSION REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION AND RESPONSE FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Responses received from:

1. Maidstone Borough Council
2. Kent County Council
3. Historic England
4. Natural England
5. National Highways
6. Lichfields obo Barrett David Wilson Homes – Land at Headcorn Road
7. Lichfields obo Barrett David Wilson Homes – Land at Baldwins Farm
8. NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board
9. JAG Watson
10. Network Rail
11. Trustee of Dawkins Trust
12. Surveymonkey responses
13. Southern Water (comments recorded within the Survey Monkey comments)
14. CBRE on behalf of Wates Developments

The table overleaf provides a summary of the comments received, where the Ref. column aligns with the numbering of respondents as shown above.

Spelling errors in actual responses have not been corrected.

Full copies of the responses have been sent to MBC directly.

Ref	Who?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
1.	1	SEA screening	The Council note however that the present consultation version of Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan (May 2025) is different to that which the screening opinion was undertaken for. It appears two policies have been added to the present consultation version (Policies S14 Publicly Accessible Parking and S16 Allotments and Community Growing Spaces). Upon review of these policies it appears that they do not propose likely significant environmental effects and so the Council is happy that the previous screening opinion is still valid.	Noted.
2.	3	General	We welcome the production of this neighbourhood plan, but do not consider it necessary for Historic England to be involved in the detailed development of your strategy at this time.	Noted.
3.	4	General	Natural England does not have any specific comments on this draft neighbourhood plan.	Noted.
4.	5	General	We are concerned about the safety, reliability, and operational efficiency of the Strategic Road Network (SRN). In the case of Staplehurst, no stretches of the SRN pass through the parish. We have read the consultation document and noted that the Plan does not allocate sites for housing development. We are satisfied that this Neighbourhood Plan, if adopted and implemented, would not have an unacceptable impact on the safety, reliability, and/or operational efficiency of the SRN. Our formal response is no objection .	Noted.
5.	12	General	Comments relate in general to all policies in so far as Staplehurst should be assisted in keeping and enhancing its unique characteristics of a small town with a country/village appeal.	Noted.
6.	12	General	We don't need more housing. We need to stop over development of the houses here that were accessible to local people that have/are being developed being the means of local	Noted.

Ref	Who?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
			people. The village is struggling with the weight of the extra people and the road network is so busy! Staplehurst seems to know what it wants but MBC seems to overrule all planning permission. Houses that are not in keeping with local area!	
7.	12	General	Thank you for all the hard work and thought into these plans.	Noted.
8.	12	General	The timing of this consultation is ironic as the Parish Council's application for the 3G pitch at Jubilee Fields breaches at least half these policies - of which the most grievous are S9(the car park's destruction of green space LGS30), S11 (destruction of View 5) and S12 (dark skies - obviously impacted by flood-lights). As regards S13 (improving walkways, etc) it is a pity that the Council did not adopt the suggestion of having a proper track around the 3G fence outer perimeter, so pedestrians and cyclists from the Cradducks Lane area could avoid the dangerous corner on the main road. This would have given credibility to S13. As regards S1, the Council should demonstrate greater flexibility in relation to applications outside the village envelope. Now that	The PC put much thought into this scheme and undertook ecology studies as part of it. The car park overlays what is currently an informal parking area and will smarten that area. We do not consider that this is at odds with the desire to designate the space as an LGS. In relation to the floodlights, these have been progressed in advance of the NDP and pre-existed as part of the football pitch. They adhere to lower level lighting requirements. The new 3G pitch is located further away from the village and existing developments and has also been assessed with regard to low level lighting. Both conform to MBC's lighting policy. This sits outside the land in question and is the responsibility of KCC Highways and would not easily connect to Cradducks Lane (which has 60mph/ no road markings/ pavement) A pathway within the perimeter would need a pavement-type material. In any case, there is a running track already in the village – Surrenden Field. That proposal has gone through.

Ref	Who?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
			the 3G pitch compound will industrialise Jubilee Fields, the Council should recognise this as an extension to the village envelope. Thus the Council's recommended rejection of 25/501840 (Crabtree Oast) was wholly wrong in light of its own 3G proposal - eg various elements of current policy LPRSP15. Finally, the Council should welcome appropriate new housing in Staplehurst in view of our excellent transport links, the need for new families to utilise our trophy assets like the 3G pitch, and the need to build a vibrant community.	The NDP supports sustainable development.
9.	12	General	Various comments on the factual content of the plan: • The FOREWORD should be written by the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group, or perhaps the Parish Council Chairman, not an ex-Chairman. • The SNP was 2016 – 2031. This one should be 2025 – 2038. • The decimal numbering system should be 1.01, 1.02 because it progresses beyond 1.10. • I do not believe that there has been a wide community involvement. • As a Rural Service Centre“ enhancing its role and the provision of services to meet the needs of the local community”, Staplehurst has seen a drastic reduction in services and	Amend to be the new Chair. Amend the first date but retain 2024 as start date for the review. Noted but retain as is. See consultation statement. The SG disagrees and has sought to engage the community throughout the process. Many of these issues fall outside the remit of the SNP.

Ref	Who?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
			infrastructure since the RSC label was forced upon us by MBC. No more development without proper infrastructure! Fig. 2 “key services will be retained and supported” The evidence of the demise of evening, Sunday and Bank Holiday buses, the removal of banks and dedicated post office, the reduction to one small public house all point to the lack of support and retention of key services. Neither shift workers nor residents wishing to access many of the County Town’s facilities can use public transport. For ‘key workers’ and others in the ‘40% affordable houses’ many are reliant on the village for employment and all infrastructure needs. Sadly, they are inadequate. 4 “Key infrastructure improvements for Staplehurst include” ... 4a) “junction improvements” Really? We’ve been waiting for decades for the Cuckolds Corner crossroads to be solved. KCC Highways haven’t managed a solution yet, nor will they without compulsory purchases, demolition and road and footpath widening to minimum standards. • Which “communication with local groups” were involved? As Chairman of three Staplehurst groups, I have no recollection of being approached. • What “resident survey”? When was it and where are the results? Where has the 2016 SNP’s top priority disappeared to? There was overwhelming support from residents to make the Village Centre building into a fit-for-purpose centre for every aged resident, whilst attracting in hirers because of the quality of the premises. The recently added projects suit minority groups only. Let’s get back to prioritising for the	The consultation was extended – twice – to enable... The residents survey results us on the Parish Council website. The results were also included in the Village Update.

Ref	Who?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
			whole community, not just a few footballers or individuals with 'glory projects' to boast about. 7.16 I strongly object to this statement regarding the planting between platform 1 and the car park. As the individual who rotovated the soil, helped plant and as a regular weeder of our family's two plots, we made an enormous difference to the stark, concrete, 'prison-wall' look. The choice of plants was British Rail's and large mature trees and shrubbery beneath have added much needed sound insulation and oxygen to the area. More bio-diversity is a must! - S13 I have had to tick 'Strongly disagree' with this policy because 'Transport and Movement' with no mention of roads and the vehicles using them is ridiculous. All new developments MUST provide alternative road links to the existing roadsystem. Similarly, the ever-worsening bus 'service' needs reversing. Clear access to bus stops is essential, as is a reliable fleet operating to serve the needs of the users. - Table 4 Are these comments accurate now? A men's shed is already operating in the Youth Club building. Toilets upgraded? - In the list of Evidence Documents I do not see a link to the Resident Survey quoted in 3.1 as mentioned above. Where is this evidence?	This is re: The proposed installation of low growing shrubs is not supported locally, as from experience with the planting between Platform 1 and the original car park, there is no maintenance done and the shrubs just grow and get out of hand. NR make ultimate decision on what improvements will happen, but not published. Amending sentence to say we would support where it is maintained by NR. This sits outside the remit of what the SNP can influence. F – toilets have been upgraded. Men's Shed in place. Roof being repaired. Sense check the table – Adele – send. Residents Survey is on the website. The contents page does this already.

Ref	Who?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
			- A contents list at the front with page numbers shown would make reference to policies much easier to access. I find the numbering system totally confusing. Having policies 1 to 6 with sub-titles numbered 6.1 to 6.40 (should be 6.01 to 6.40) has some merit, but starting again with 7.1 for policy 7, 8.1 at policy 9 (not 8), and so on, just confuses. Either all policies should come under chapter 6 or each policy have its own number. - With the expected imminent demise of MBC, how will the SNP wording be relevant to the new higher-tier authority? I trust we will not be expected to re-invent a SNP in a few years' time! I commend the work of the steering group in getting the document this far. However, any small group will not reflect the opinions of the whole community without wide and frequent consultations, as happened with the original SNP.	Numbering is by chapter not policy. Amend references, where relevant, to LPA. There has been ample opportunity for people to get involved throughout the project.
10.	12	General	In general I totally support the aspirations and intent of the Neighbourhood Plan and its importance for Staplehurst.	Noted.
11.	12	General	As a general comment on the document, had I not been a member of a group I would have had no awareness of its existence. On housing and biodiversity, developers need to ensure that existing hedgerows and trees are protected prior to commencing building.	The SG has sought to engage the community widely. Enforcement issue. The PC has done a lot of work with MBC enforcement regarding this issue – both protecting existing and planting new ones. E.g. planting in Sainsbury – 15 dead trees were replanted. Plus Redrow reheded.
12.	12	General	This Plan is a must for our community to help fight unsuitable developments. I am very pleased to see policies on protecting views, dark skies and green spaces as well improved biodiversity	Noted.

Ref	Who?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
			and sustainability. I congratulate the team for all their hard work.	
13.	6 and 7	Vision and Objectives	Barratt supports the Parish Council's vision for Staplehurst and recognises the parish's unique heritage and strong sense of identity.	Noted.
14.	8	Para 3.1	Page 13 – 3.1 – What is the Plan seeking to achieve ? In the diagram –Medical Centre should be replaced with 'Health Facility'. We query the commentary in the current medical centre commentary box being directly linked to 'what the plan is seeking to achieve' as the responsibility for commissioning of services sits with NHS Kent and Medway. The Mote Medical Practice has been providing primary medical care services from Staplehurst, as a branch surgery, since April 2025.	Amend. Amend.
15.	1	Policy S1	The policy appears to be in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 strategic policies. The modification requires a referendum because the Council feels it has introduced new criteria with regards coalescence.	Noted.
16.	6 and 7	Policy S1	Barratt supports the principle of draft Policy S1 and is committed to delivering resilient, well-connected developments where everyone has the opportunity to live and thrive in high-quality, sustainably located homes, that are appropriate in their scale to the setting they are located within.	Noted.
17.	9	Policy S1	The current SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY must be adhered to - where it crosses the Headcorn Road and runs south towards the Church in particular.	Noted. The settlement boundary is retained as per the Local Plan.

Ref	Who ?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
			As a walker I have been surprised by the increasing number of pocket housing development close to footpaths, for example the one in full view on the high ground at Marden Thorn - the high point . Crazy, unless it was to prevent the travellers settling there. Ditto on the west side of the Maidstone Road. Why have a plan ?	
18.	12	Policy S1	Agree it is important to try to preserve our beautiful countryside and build on brownfield sites first, where possible	Noted.
19.	12	Policy S1	It is essential that new housing and commercial developments are supported with the requisite growth in infrastructure, amenities and utilities, especially water drainage and sewage.	Noted and the policy seeks to reinforce this.
20.	12	Policy S1	Allocation H1 (50) MUST be removed from consideration for housing. These fields form a what has become an essential part of the local community - they are a fundamental space for outdoor leisure, for dog walking and exercise routes (for A LOT of residents). Much of the space has already been significantly reduced by farms closing access in neighbouring fields and the Bartons housing estate being built, and we have been left with very little. There are also substantial landscapes / views that would be lost, not to mention the habitat of local wildlife. The idea of bulldozing and building on this land is abhorrent and will be fought at every turn.	Noted although this is being progressed via the Local Plan.

Ref	Who?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
21.	12	Policy S1	If building is being proposed on current areas used for walking with or without dogs and on what few green spaces are left in the village I strongly disagree with this. There will soon be nowhere left that isn't concrete and it should not be allowed. This renders most of the other points Neutral to me.	The SNP cannot stop development, rather direct it to the most sustainable places. The demonstrably special green spaces within the parish are proposed for designation as local green space, which would safeguard them against inappropriate development.
22.	12	Policy S1	Allocation H1 (50) should be removed from consideration for housing at all cost. These fields form an essential part of the local community outdoor leisure/exercise routes, dog walking and provide an opportunity to have some quite time alone to think and look after mental well-being in a natural setting (for A LOT of residents), which have already been significantly reduced by farms closing access in neighbouring fields. There are also substantial landscapes / views that would be lost.	See above.
23.	12	Policy S1	Allocation H1 (50) should be removed from consideration for housing. We cannot be without these fields as a village as they form a important space for pet owners. Many residents use these facilities and we have already had this space reduced by the existing housing. Please do not take our dog walking areas.	See above.
24.	12	Policy S1	If they build on more green areas it will be disgusting, stop ruining our countryside	Noted.
25.	12	Policy S1	Allocation H1 (50) should be removed from consideration for housing. These fields form an essential part of the local community outdoor leisure/exercise routes (for ALOT of residents), which have already been significantly reduced	Noted – as above.

Ref	Who?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
			by farms closing accessing neighbouring fields. There are also substantial landscapes / views that would be lost.	
26.	14	Policy S1	Welcome in principle the proactive response of the PC in creating a policy that provides direction for how developments outside the defined settlement will be considered in respect of meeting the basic conditions. Recommend updating the policy to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development and circumstances in which this applies.	The the presumption in favour of sustainable development and circumstances in which this applies is set out fully in the NPPF and there is no need to repeat in Policy S1.
27.	1	Policy S2	The policy appears to be in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 strategic policies. The modification requires a referendum because it is a new policy.	Noted.
28.	6 and 7	Policy S2	Barratt would also identify that in order for Staplehurst to remain a vibrant village with thriving businesses, communal facilities such as the GP surgery and the primary school, and excellent transport links, new homes will have to respond to the needs of all households such as those with young and growing families. This may require a mix of house type sizes and styles to ensure that those households with larger families can remain living in the local area and continue to support the thriving village. We therefore encourage there to be flexibility within the policy to also allow family sized homes.	Not excluding other housing – we are just focusing on those needs that are highlighted via the HNS.
29.	12	Policy S2	The majority of recent house building has not helped local people as to expensive and a lot of the social housing has been to overflow from other local authorities not to local born +bred.	Noted – the policy seeks to address this.
30.	12	Policy S2	Correctly supports smaller affordable development but does not seem to do anything to discourage 3/4 bedroom houses.	The policy supports proposals that target a specific local need, as evidenced by the HNA, but this will always be

Ref	Who?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
				part of a wider housing mix, especially where sites are strategic in nature.
31.	12	Policy S2	The local housing needs will not be met if developers are allowed to sell new housing to outside councils who will import the occupants into the village.	Noted.
32.	14	Policy S2	We endorse the practical approach that is taken to Policy S2 in stating that the relevant mix should be provided "in so far as it is reasonably practicable and subject to viability." We would recommend that this sentence also includes the word "contextually appropriate" in order to recognise that some priorities (i.e. the proposal to deliver a higher percentage of 1-2 bedroom units) may be better suited to locations that are closer to the defined commercial centre/ the railway station when compared to other locations.	The HNA that underpins the policy takes account of the context of the Parish already. The SG is minded not to include this additional wording.
33.	1	Policy S3	The policy appears to be in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 strategic policies. However please remember that the relevant strategic policies include LPRSP15 criteria 8 as well as LPRSP14(C). The modification requires a referendum because the Council feels it has introduced new criteria.	Noted. The MLPR policies mentioned can be added to the conformity reference.
34.	6 and 7	Policy S3	On the whole, Barratt supports the principle of the policy. However, criterion B(vii) of draft Policy S3 states: "B. Development proposals should demonstrate how they have sought to address the following matters as they are appropriate to their scale, nature and location: ... vii. traffic generation and parking does not adversely affect vehicular and pedestrian safety."	Add to the end – "in accordance with the Manual for Streets".

Ref	Who ?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
			It is considered that this criterion of draft Policy S2 fails to meet the first basic condition (paragraph 8(2)(a) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)), as it does not have regard to national policy. National policy is clear that “development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be <u>severe</u>...” (Lichfields emphasis) (paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (“NPPF”). Whilst we appreciate that draft Policy S3 does not propose to refuse development proposals, it could have the unintended consequence of reducing the bar for refusing proposals on highways grounds from ‘severe’ to simply ‘adverse’. It is considered that criterion B(vii) should be amended as follows: “vii. traffic generation and parking does not severely affect vehicular and pedestrian safety.”	
35.	12	Policy S3	Parking of new properties should not adversely affect existing residents parking as well as safety.	Noted, but parking impact covered in clause v.
36.		Policy S3	In broad terms we are supportive of the aims and ambitions of this policy. Within the Draft Policy it is noted that "the scale, character, and siting of the proposal should respect the landscape and its features, valued views into and out of the settlement, the local streetscape and heritage assets." As drafted it is unclear if "valued views" is referring to those identified in Draft Policy S11 or something different. We would we would welcome clarify on this and suggest that alternative	This wording relates to Policy S11 and will amend to make this clear.

Ref	Who ?	Page/para/ policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
			terminology may be needed to avoid confusion with "valued landscapes" in the NPPF (2024). In respect of valued landscapes the Landscape Institute have published a technical guidance note on "Assessing landscape value outside national designations". The Institute includes the following definition: "A 'valued landscape' is an area identified as having sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes." The guidance also notes that (a) 'everyday' landscapes may nevertheless have value to people, and (b) the identification of landscape value needs to be applied proportionately ensuring that identification of 'valued landscape' is not over used. We suggest that such an assessment could only ever be undertaken at the plan-wide level to ensure that a proportionate approach is taken and to avoid the over-representation of valued landscapes.	
37.	1	Policy S4	The policy appears to be in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 strategic policies. However please remember that the relevant strategic policies include LPRSP15 criteria 8 as well as LPRSP14(C). The modification requires a referendum because the Council feels it has introduced new criteria	Noted. The MLPR policies mentioned can be added to the conformity reference.
38.	13	Policy S4, S7, S10	Southern Water strongly supports requirements that seek to ensure surface water is appropriately managed as close to source as possible. This is in line with the new National Standards for SuDS -	We note that in the recent NPPF update, the government has removed the limitation for SuDS to only be considered on 'Major Development' and SuDS should now be considered by all development proportionate to the scale and nature of the scheme (Paragraph 182). This

Ref	Who?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
			https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems-suds. We note that paragraph 6.16 of the draft Neighbourhood Plan acknowledges localised flooding as one of the impacts of climate change. However, we could not find a specific reference to sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) in the draft policies proposed for the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan. To make Neighbourhood Plan policy more effective we suggest adding the following wording to Policy S4 (or Policy S10 'Biodiversity, Landscape and Environment'). <i>Give priority to the use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate.</i> We also ask that the explanatory section associated with this new wording refer to the new National Standards for SuDS. SuDS and permeable surfaces could also be acknowledged within the public realm section of Policy S7. Further explanation and evidence: We note that draft plan includes rainwater/greywater harvesting and re-use in section (v) of Policy S4 and we strongly support this inclusion.	recognises the cumulative impact multiple smaller developments can have on surface water flood risk. Hence add in reference to SuDS in Policy (S4) to: "Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be incorporated into all new development proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposals". Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board – refer apps to them when applicable to comment on drainage issues. They have enforcement powers if required.
39.	1	Policy S5	The policy appears to be in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 strategic policies. However please remember that the relevant strategic policies include LPRSP15 criteria 8 and LPRSP14(C) criteria 4.	Noted. The MLPR policies mentioned can be added to the conformity reference.

Ref	Who ?	Page/para/ policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
			The modification requires a referendum because the Council feels it has introduced new criteria to the previous policy PW3.	
40.	1	Policy S6	The policy appears to be in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 strategic policy LPRSP14(b). The modification requires a referendum because the Council feels it has introduced new criteria with regards non-designated heritage assets to previous policy PW4.	Noted.
41.	12	Policy S6	There should be scope for a 'good' replacement of something designated heritage asset. Parish rooms or community centre are possibly examples. The Free Church is now considered a Heritage asset, despite its age and modern design.	Noted. The purpose of the NDHA identification is to safeguard heritage. This does not preclude improvements to a property.
42.	12	Policy S6	Agree it is important to preserve historic sites/buildings that give character to the village	Noted.
43.	1	Policy S7	The policy appears to be in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 strategic policies. However please remember that the relevant strategic policies include LPRSP6(f) and LPRSP11 also. The modification requires a referendum because the Council feels it has introduced new criteria with regards temporary uses, public realm and upper floor residential on the previous policies C6 and VH1 which have also been amalgamated.	Noted. The MLPR policies mentioned can be added to the conformity reference.
44.	12	Policy S7	Agree that the efforts made to try and improve the visual appearance of the parade area should continue. Appreciate it is hard when you can't pop pretty facades on buildings when they are privately owned but every little helps	Noted.
45.	1	Policy S8	The policy appears to be in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 strategic policy LPRSP6(f). The modification requires a just examination because the Council feels it has retained the essence of former policy GW1.	Noted.

Ref	Who ?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
46.	10	Policy S8	As of 18th June, NR and Southeastern railway has formed the South East Railway (SER) to unite track and train on the move towards a fully integrated railway under Great British Railways (GBR). NR support the Policy in its role of supporting the enhancement of the area around the railway station. Para 7.13 includes reference to previous discussions around rationalising the station car park. It remains NR's view that options for this should continue to be explored, along with SER. The potential to provide a multistorey car park to free up land for another purpose should remain an option. This would accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and make efficient use of brownfield land at public transport hubs. As noted, previous s106 developer contributions have been secured to fund various improvements around the station. As such, NR recognises the 'Gateway' nature of the station in serving Staplehurst and opportunities to continue to improve both the station and its surrounding area should continue to be sought. Future CIL funding and s106 contributions could be allocated to the station and its immediate area to aid with these improvements. Further discussion around how best to improve the station area should continue and the potential to provide station improvements alongside commercial/retail opportunities to enhance footfall should also continue to be considered. This would help bring vitality and viability to the area around the station as well as serving new development. Support from the SNP on this is welcome and reference within the draft Policy	Add in.

Ref	Who ?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
			would aid this. NR suggests the following wording be added (in italics): Proposals to improve the railway station area will be supported, where they can demonstrate that they would lead to improvements to the public realm in this area, enhance the visual approach, <i>increase footfall and vitality</i> and physical connectivity to the village from the north and integrate access for walking (and wheeling) and bicycle riders to link to nearby residential areas.	
47.	12	Policy S8	Policy is about the appearance but justification is about wider changes such as retail investment.	The policy also includes direction on accessibility, in line with the justification.
48.	12	Policy S8	The station area needs tidying up to quite a degree. A proper '10 minute set-down/pick up' area needs to be provided and definitely more pedestrian crossings on station approach and across the A229 to help people connect from train to bus. Alternately make the buses actually come into the station.	Noted.
49.	1	Policy S9	The policy appears to be in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 strategic policy LPRSP6(f). The modification requires a referendum because it is a new policy.	Noted.
50.	6 and 7	Policy S9	Barratt would add that when considering the draft settlement boundary, that is drawn tightly around Staplehurst, the important landscape views to the south of Staplehurst and the draft 44 Local Green Spaces located throughout the village, there is limited space remaining that is capable of accommodating new homes to meet any future housing needs of Staplehurst.	Noted. The LGSs have been identified following consultation with the community and have all been justified.

Ref	Who?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
51.	11	Policy S9	The land in question is not owned by the golf club. The majority of the land is owned by the Trustees of The Dawkins Trust. I am one of the Trustees and having consulted the others, I am pleased to confirm our support for the proposal to designate the land owned by the Trustees as a Local Green Space. There were some incorrect statements in the draft entry provided. I have corrected these, made some further amendments and have also marked on the map the area of land that is owned by the Trustees. I attach a revised document for LGS1 Village Golf Club. I have used track changes so you can see the original text and the changes I have made.	Noted. Noted and agreed to amend.
52.	12	Policy S9	Jubilee field which was designated to be for the whole village is being taken over by football leaving little green space for workers, etc.	Noted – this is included a Local Green Space.
53.	12	Policy S9	The green spaces are a joke apart from the designated playing fields.	Noted.
54.	12	Policy S9	Agree it is important to preserve green spaces within local road/estate communities	Noted.
55.	12	Policy S9 and S10	There is no reference to or consideration of biodiversity corridors or green space linkage (either creation or maintenance of such corridors through developed areas), and such linkage is critical for allowing wildlife to move freely and safely through the landscape, supporting overall	Policy S9 seeks to safeguard a number of valued local green spaces. Policy S10 seeks to maintain and where possible improve and better connect the green and blue infrastructure network.

Ref	Who ?	Page/para/policy	Comments/ Proposed change	SG response
			wellbeing of our natural environment and genetic diversity of both fauna and flora. Urban wildlife is scarce in our village and surrounds, and the crisis needs urgent attention. To that end, and considering the climate crisis and flooding, more focus is required on surface hardening (or hard landscaping) - to help mitigate flooding, reduce air temperatures, and provide habitat networks for biodiversity. Most gardens are being converted into driveways or otherwise surfaced (artificial grass, paving, etc.), and without consideration of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems or biodiversity impacts. There also seems to be little in the way of proactive planning to increase our improve existing green spaces.	Often front gardens can be converted to parking without the need to apply for planning permission. Emphasise in the policy the resisting paving of front gardens where not permitted development. See previous comments on PC role in greening. Greener Staplehurst Group do planting to improve biodiversity on a voluntary basis. Many spaces not publicly owned, so more challenging to impact.
56.	14	Policy S9	Whilst we have no issue in broad terms with this policy, it would not be consistent with National Policy to apply Green Belt policy to this. The policy as drafted currently states "Development proposals within the designated local green spaces will be consistent with national policy for Green Belt." This will need to be amended.	The LGS designation would apply Green Belt policy to these spaces.
57.	1	Policy S10	The policy appears to be in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 strategic policies. However please remember that the relevant strategic policies include LPRSP13 as well due to the impact on open spaces. The modification requires a referendum because it is a new policy.	Noted. The MLPR policy mentioned can be added to the conformity reference.

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58.	2	Policy S10	The County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority for Kent, supports the reference made to the wider Maidstone Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy in Policy S10, which in itself makes specific reference to the inclusion and benefits of SuDS. However, the County Council is disappointed that there appears to have been no such consideration given to the requirement for SuDS within the Neighbourhood Plan, despite Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which requires all new development to include SuDS. As such, the County Council feels that Policy S10 could be strengthened to require the use of SuDS as outlined in Section 14 of the NPPF. The multiple benefits that SuDS can provide, which include additional amenity and biodiversity benefits, are well documented and would therefore seem to align with Chapter 8 of the Neighbourhood Plan.	We would be minded to include a clause requiring the use of SuDS, with a particular focus on those that are multifunctional. This has been included in Policy S4.
59.	12	Policy S10	Perhaps could include something about consideration of the long term maintenance after development - elsewhere in this SNP reference to shrubs at the station not being maintained.	Biodiversity net gain requires a mandatory maintenance agreement, set out in a legal agreement. There is no need to repeat this in the SNP policy.
60.	1	Policy S11	The policy appears to be in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 strategic policies. The modification requires a referendum because it is a new policy.	Noted.
61.	9	Policy S11	The comment is about the Conservation Area Appraisal but relates to views: para 5: Views that include views towards the Church..... are considered exceptionally.	The policy already includes views to the church as per the CA Appraisal. Re obscured views, where hedges are owned privately, there is little that can be done beyond engaging the landowner.

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			Comment: One of the best views in Staplehurst used to be the view south across the fields up the rise to the Church from the Headcorn Road - (footpaths KM303 & 304). This view is not included in those listed in Policy S11 Protection of locally significant views - see under 8 Environment and Green Space. One likely reason for this is that this view is now partially obscured by bits of an unmanaged hedge which has been allowed to have overgrown randomly into clusters of shrubs. Several residents hold the view that this is all part of a deliberate plan by the landowner to obscure the view in order to increase the possibility of his land being built on. The view of the church has also been further obscured by the unmanaged growth of a screen of trees at the top of the rise. Action should be taken to restore this lost view. While the views from the approach to the village from the south were rightly protected in the first version of our Neighbourhood Plan, by the time it was written the view of the Church from the Headcorn Road had already been obscured - which did really announce our arrival in our village - which the queue at the traffic lights significantly fails to do.	
62.	12	Policy S11	Objective is very good but whiles some views are unique, others less so.	Noted.
63.	12	Policy S11	The area south of Headcorn Road over the Stanley Farm fields towards the Church has for many years (25+?) been recognised	See answer 57.

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			as a Landscape of Local Value, with the views contributing part of this evaluation. This view appears to have been removed with no explanation. Is this right?	
64.	1	Policy S11	With respect to the land interest of Wates, the land is located in an area that is crossed by Views 9, 11, 12. We are conscious that there is not specific evidence listed within the evidence document that would confirm how the extent of the arcs have been determined. With these arcs essentially being given Development Plan status it is important that the policy does not pre-determine the more technical and evidence based work that would be undertaken through a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Thus, in principle we have not objection to the identification of views, their extent should be qualified through details assessments at the development management stage. The absence of this at present means that Draft Policy S11 fails the tests of basic conditions. It is a requirement of the NPPF (2024) that plans are justified. This is taken to mean that it is an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence. Whilst the evidence of the Staplehurst Conservation Area - Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (November 2024) arguably provides justification for those local views within the Conservation Area, there is no such equivalent evidence based document for the wider views the are identified.	The NPPF (para 132) actively encourages communities to identify the characteristics of a place that make it special. The views have been determined by the community via local consultation including the community survey and the mapping workshop. We consider this policy to meet the basic conditions. See also the basic conditions statement.
65.	1	Policy S12	The policy appears to be in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 strategic policies.	Noted.

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			The modification requires a referendum because it is a new policy.	
66.	2	Section 9 (Transport and Movement) para 9.11-9.12	The County Council, as Local Highway Authority for Kent, strongly recommends that paragraphs 9.11 – 9.12 are encapsulated within a new bespoke policy that requires development proposals to be accessible by public transport and, where appropriate, provide new or enhanced public transport services and facilities. Full policy weight will be essential in enabling public transport improvements, including the desired uplift in off-peak bus services referenced in paragraph 9.11, to be secured through the planning process. The County Council notes that the objective of improvements to the A229 crossroads along Marden Road/Headcorn Road has not been carried forward from the current Neighbourhood Plan into the Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan. This is despite paragraph 9.2 highlighting the junction to be relevant to many of the concerns raised by the community regarding traffic. In the absence of a firm commitment within the new plan, the prospect of identifying and securing improvements at this location in conjunction with new development will be reduced.	The SG would be minded to include reference to public transport within Clause A of Policy S13. We will amend the title of the policy to encapsulate ‘sustainable transport options’ as opposed to just ‘active travel’. Add in new clause as per bold text in the rep. Public transport situation (buses) has worsened. Add in specific example of the problems E.g. if in ah and work in Maidstone (nearest principle town)– physically cannot go to work e.g. on Sunday/ bank holidays, post 4pm – input bus time. (Richard). Amend clause to focus on buses not only trains. Add in the retained objectives from the previous NP into the supporting text.
67.	9	Section 9, para 9.8 iv	“Beyond the village itself, there are many public rights of way leading into the countryside and on to neighbouring settlements” Comment: I regularly walk from Staplehurst to Frittenden, on to Headcorn, and back. Walking around Staplehurst is losing its appeal for three reasons:	Noted. Include working from NDP (2016) Policy E1 into Policy S13.

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			1. Our footpaths pass some beautiful properties (some high in value) and permission has been granted to divert the path behind a hedge or fence, for privacy reasons. This destroys the view of the house and, in some instances makes the walk unpleasant - for example the path runs between two six ft fences, resulting in these footpaths being rarely (if ever) used. 2. Several farmers have pushed paths, which originally crossed a field, hard against a hedge. The barbed-wire fencing used is extremely DANGEROUS to the walker, especially in wet weather - the danger being the high risk of falling against it in slippery and muddy conditions, and cutting the face and arms. In several instances the farmers no longer clear behind this new fence, and the footpaths become impassible, being overtaken by the unmanaged hedge. 3. The village is now surrounded by a ring of unplanned settlements, shanty towns, which have destroyed the rural nature of Staplehurst. Examples are on both sides of the Marden Road, in George Street, on the left of the approach to Curtisden Green, Clapper Lane, the south side of the Goudhurst Road, the ghetto that Maplehurst has become..... The worst is the enclave is on the footpath on the east side of Cradducks Lane, where the environment is seriously hostile and threatening. The character of our surroundings has already been permanently damaged by these developments, ruined in	

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			many places, there are just so many plastic buildings with their out-of-character gateways, and Klondike-like shanties. In summer the stench from some the neighbouring ditches can be quite upsetting. The aggressive guard dogs. The very bright security lighting at night - particularly on the north side of the Marden Road - Policy S12: Dark Skies !! All this discourages residents from both walking and cycling around the village. It makes an absolute mockery of having a neighbourhood plan at all. Why not cover the whole place with decent-looking houses, and so we could afford facilities such as increased water pressure to enable us to use the most efficient boilers.	
68.	1	Policy S13	The policy appears to be in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 strategic policy LPRSP12. The modification requires a referendum because it is a new policy.	Noted.
69.	2	Policy S13	The County Council notes that there appears to be wording missing from the second sentence of Policy S13 Part B regarding pavement provision and the Manual for Streets.	Noted and typo to be amended.
70.	10	Policy S13	The draft Policy should encourage safe, direct routes to the railway station to promote active and sustainable travel and use of the rail network. Improved public realm around the station and retail or other uses could further encourage people to access the station area. It is not felt that this would detract from the village centre but provide a secondary area for the benefit of rail passengers and those living closer to the station.	Noted – include wording to this effect into clause A (and direct). Transport nodes – including the railways station is encapsulated here.

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71.	12	Policy S13	People need cars, bus services so poor.	Noted and elaborated in the supporting text. Additional clause on bus provision has been added on the advice of KCC.
72.	12	Policy S13	The policy is important and although there is no direct comment on the 20-minute neighbourhood it is referred to in the justification. Given the age profile of many in the village the 10 minute walk justification is very optimistic (even if the walkways were perfect)	Noted. The 10-minute concept is an optimum output, however the focus is on connectivity and it is noted that not all developments would readily achieve a 10-minute walkabout zone.
73.	1	Policy S14	The Council feels that this policy is not in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 and does not meet the basic conditions for neighbourhood plans as per paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 specifically criteria (a): <i>'having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the order'</i> The policy is too restrictive and not aligned with National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 16, and not in general conformity with Maidstone Local Plan Review Policy SPLPR12 criterion d & e which seek to manage parking provision and also improve transport choice, the retention of car parking in perpetuity does not allow for this. Plus, the site is owned by the Council and as such does not allow for sufficient flexibility for development if needs be. It should be amended to allow for such alignment, general conformity and potential for redevelopment. The modification requires a referendum because it is a new policy.	The response is noted. In relation to Clause A, the findings of the consultation identified a particular concern about the availability of public car parking locally, particularly that which serves the village core. In a rural area such as Staplehurst, there is inevitably a high reliance on cars. Notwithstanding the emphasis to improve 'active travel' opportunities, as supported in SNP Policy S13, improving transport choice should therefore include provision of space to allow for car users. Bell Lane is the only public car park close to the village centre, serving the village core as well as other assets in the vicinity such as the church. There is no other public car parking nearby. Any future development of a multi storey car park at the railway station would not be suitable to all users wishing to access the village centre. Bell Lane is the only car park in this part of the village. The SG would support the car park being nominated as an ACV and this is to be pursued by the Parish Council.

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				The SG considers that this does align to LPRSP12 clause d, which says: “Manage parking provision in the town centre and the wider borough to ensure it is fair and proportionate and supports demand management”. The demand for such parking is apparent and the loss of this parking would not be fair or proportionate. The retention of the car park would not restrict, in combination with other schemes, the delivery of clause e.
74.	10	Policy S14	It is NR’s view that the draft Policy should provide for an option to demonstrate that parking is not needed to save land that could be available for alternative uses from being kept as under-utilised parking. This would help to ensure that land could be better used if appropriate. In light of this, the following wording is proposed (in italics): Development proposals that would result in the loss of existing publicly available off-street car parking spaces – in particular at Bell Lane - will not be supported, unless it can be demonstrated that off-street car parking is not required or is continually under-used and could be re-purposed for an alternative land use	See answer above.
75.	12	Policy S14	While I think it’s important to maintain public parking there needs to be done about the Bell Lane car park being used by local houses to park additional cars on a long term basis. Every time I have tried to park there, day or night there are no spaces as it’s being used as an extension of resident parking. It’s too small for this to happen. I understand that people don’t want the roads to be come clogged up like it is around the school but	This is an enforcement issue and needs taking up separately. (Garages removed as a result of development, leaving residents no choice but to park in Bell Lane.) No land in the centre left to address this.

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			permanently parking at Bell Lane isn't the answer. Perhaps Cameras that monitor cars that have been in there for more than 9 hours from 9-6pm and a fine is raised if this is longer could be an answer as this would leave some parking for visitors to the village.	
76.	12	Policy S14	Agree that it is important to preserve free, local parking such as the carpark in Bell Lane. It can be hard for those visiting the village (eg. to enjoy a walk and pub lunch) to find space to park in the shared carpark though. The same cars seem to be parked there every time. If the spaces are meant to be used as free private driveways for local residents then that's okay but if they are meant to encourage passing traffic and external visitors who may use the village, the idea of looking into a time-limit (a decent amount of time such as 4 hours) may be a good idea.	Noted.
77.	14	Policy S14	It is unclear what would be required by the following "proposals for major development should seek to incorporate publicly accessible off-road car parking spaces." If this is referring to non-allocated visitor space then this is acceptable.	Yes, this could be achieved through a non-allocated visitor space, or indeed a number of these. Or it could be the provision of a car parking area for non residents. To be pursued by the Parish Council.
78.	9	Section 10	We need a sports hall where which the physically active of all ages can meet up to take regular exercise - for five-a-side football and other indoor team sports in all weathers. It would need showers and changing-room facilities. While the Village Centre and Free Church satisfy many useful and social needs, neither are for taking serious exercise. One of the disadvantages of the decision to retain the existing Village Centre building, is that it can never be adapted to any serious indoor sports activities.	Merit in the idea but no space at Jubilee Field. Only current space is Home Farm as a possible, but would need viability testing and remote from the village so car reliant. Potential for units at NR, but recent app for gym turned down due to lack of car parking (free). Reflected in the plan as there being a deficit of indoor space for sport.

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			This cheap building could easily be located in the Jubilee Field, where there is adequate space for both a new building and parking. SHOULD STAPLEHURST BE OBLIGED TO ACCOMMODATE ANOTHER HOUSING ESTATE, THEN THE DEVELOPER SHOULD INCLUDE THIS MUCH-NEED FACILITY IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT.	Action – PC to liaise with the school about use of their sports hall by the community. Was that a stipulation of the planning permission? Need to check.
79.	1	Policy S15	The modification requires a referendum because it is a new policy having amalgamated previous policies C1-C6 of the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan (2020) and added new facilities plus criteria for redevelopment. The modification requires a referendum because it is a new policy.	Noted.
80.	8	Policy S15 Table 4	It is suggested the commentary reads – Staplehurst Health Centre includes a range of primary and community health services, including a dental practice and a branch surgery of The Mote Medical Practice (primary medical care). The Kent and Medway Adolescent Hospital (KMAH) inpatient mental health unit for children and young people in Kent and Medway is also located at a separate location in Staplehurst	Noted and agree to amend.
81.	12	Policy S15	Support the application for our last village pub to become a community asset. Such a good idea, not only from a heritage point of view but when you see how much welcoming, warm, shared spaces like this, bring to residents too. Great for mental health too. Not relating to any policy in particular but thank you to the volunteers who help to put things like this together. It is evident that a lot of time and thought has gone into writing all the policies and maps etc. Thank you for all your time and efforts. It is much appreciated.	Noted.

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82.	12	Policy S15	We need to see more classrooms and the development of a secondary school in Staplehurst.	Noted. This is the responsibility of KCC as the Education Authority.
83.	12	Policy S15	The library and Kings Head Pub are now currently registered as assets of community interest. More strong support for the central community centre would be appreciated	Noted – ensure text reflects this.
84.	1	Policy S16	The Council feels that this policy is not in conformity with the Maidstone Local Plan Review 2021-2038 and does not meet the basic conditions for neighbourhood plans as per paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 specifically criteria (a): <i>‘having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the order’</i>. Criteria B of policy S15 is not in line with paragraph 104 of the National Planning Policy Framework as it is too prescriptive and thus needs to be edited to reflect national policy. The proposed policy is also not in general conformity with Maidstone Local Plan Review Policy SPLPR13 criterion 8(d) that allows for development in certain circumstances and is not a blanket protection. The modification requires a referendum because it is a new policy.	There are few allotment spaces (8 x half size, waiting list currently 60 people) in the parish and local engagement has demonstrated strong support to retain what little space is provided and to provide additional space. Add in additional criteria to state what must happen should an allotment space be lost.

