

# Longstanton and District Heritage Society Representation to Greater Cambridge Draft Local Plan

– *January 2026*

## Policy S/NS: Northstowe New Town

From Prehistory to the present day, the location in which the new town of Northstowe is situated, has lain at the heart of a connected fen-edge landscape of character that is quite distinct from that of nearby urban centres such as Cambridge. The vital strategic role and great personal sacrifice of Pathfinder Squadrons operating from RAF Oakington during World War II, on the very land that Northstowe is being developed, will soon pass from living memory. Archaeology has revealed very significant remains demonstrating that the Northstowe site was a key commercial and urban hub during the Roman occupation alongside evidence of major Iron Age and Medieval activity.

The **Longstanton and District Heritage Society** strongly believes that this rich heritage with which Northstowe is endowed and is shared with neighbouring villages, can serve as a key foundation block for the development of a strong community among the Northstowe residents and for building vital social connections with existing local communities (while preserving distinctive local identities). Indeed, the original planning documents for Northstowe spoke of the requirement that the town should have a “unique identity and sense of place” which can be provided through protection and effective presentation of the town’s heritage assets.

Therefore, the Heritage Society advocates that the planning framework for Northstowe that this Local Plan Policy represents, needs to openly embrace the community-building opportunities afforded by such important heritage. In line with the Northstowe Heritage Strategy (being produced by the Cambridgeshire County Council Natural and Historic Environment team), the Local Plan should state clearly the need to ensure conservation, preservation and presentation of all aspects of this heritage, facilitating learning opportunities for the benefit of all the Northstowe Community and communities of the existing neighbouring villages.

The Heritage Society recognises that some aspects of this rich heritage are acknowledged, particularly within the Supporting Information for Policy S/NS. However, there is a need for greater clarification and greater emphasis on heritage conservation and presentation within the policy itself. There are four particular aspects that the Society asks to be considered in the process of revision of this Draft Local Plan:

- 1. Clarification and confirmation of the conservation and protection status of the heritage asset known as “Northstowe Longstanton Paddocks”**

These paddocks (preserved through incorporation within the Hatton Manor estate until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century) have been identified as the Anglo-Saxon village nucleus for Longstanton. They contain important archaeological remains including old lanes, housing platforms and ridge and furrow. As such this area is a key heritage asset for both the established community of Longstanton Parish and the developing community of Northstowe itself, and therefore their protection and preservation for generations to come is essential.

It is believed that the protection of this area from development is confirmed by existing provision (e.g. Longstanton Conservation Area on the South Cambridgeshire District Council's Adopted Policies Map dated September 2018 (Appendix 1A) and the "Northstowe Longstanton Paddocks Long-Term Use and Care" plan dated December 2018). Lack of specific detail within this Local Plan Draft though is proving to be a source for confusion and concern for members of our society and other local residents.

- We ask that this area (specifically that lying south-west of Long Lane up to the bold red line marked on Figure 84: Site Plan of Policy S/NS: Northstowe (around National Grid Point TL 402 663)) be confirmed as "protected open space" and as a designated "Heritage Asset", and marked as such on the policy site plan.
- That the protected status of the Northstowe Longstanton Paddocks is clearly confirmed within the text for Policy S/NS as a designated **Heritage Asset**.

## **2. Acknowledgement in the Local Plan of the new Heritage Strategy for Northstowe being commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council Natural and Historic Environment Team**

We are aware that, using funding separately held by South Cambridgeshire District Council for this very purpose, the Cambridgeshire County Council Natural and Historic Environment team are commissioning a Heritage Strategy for Northstowe. A tender document has been prepared following consultation with the Northstowe and Longstanton Heritage Steering Group of which Longstanton and District Heritage Society is a member. The strategy will outline all the major heritage assets within the Northstowe Town boundaries, assess their individual and collective significance within the wider Fen-Edge context and develop effective strategies for their protection, conservation, presentation and deployment as learning opportunities for the community. It is important that the Heritage Strategy is recognised and supported within the planning framework of this Local Plan Policy S/NS.

## **3. Greater emphasis of the need to protect, conserve and present Northstowe's rich heritage as part of a connected Fen-Edge landscape and for the facilitation of heritage learning by all members of the Northstowe community alongside members of other local, connected communities.**

Our case for this policy to recognise the importance of Northstowe's rich heritage as a foundation block for a strong and sustainable Northstowe Community within the distinctive Fen-Edge landscape has been made above. We ask that the structure and wording of Policy S/NS be modified to give greater emphasis to the importance of Northstowe's heritage. In particular reference to Northstowe's rich heritage and its

role towards the building of a “unique identity and sense of place” should be included in the policy section entitled “Vision and Identity”.

**4. Clear designation of the Green Separation between Northstowe and the villages of Longstanton and Oakington as “Protected Space”.**

The Heritage Society is also concerned that the green separation area between Northstowe and Longstanton (as illustrated by the Northstowe Development Framework map) has no protected status within the local plan. Likewise, we are concerned that the green separation for Oakington and Westwick has been provided with protected open space status in some parts but not others. The Heritage Society is obliged by our constitution to consider landscape features within our definition of heritage. These green separation areas were originally agreed so that the requirement of Northstowe Area Action Plan could be met with regards protecting the rural character of both these original villages. The Heritage Society therefore requests that the Local Plan clearly designates the entire green separation as illustrated on the development framework map with “protected status”.

In conclusion the Longstanton and District Heritage Society is concerned that the draft local plan contains a number of errors and aspects that need clarification. The lack of clarification over the protected open space and heritage asset designation for the Northstowe Longstanton Paddocks is of particular concern and we wish to see clear designations within the Local Plan for both. Also is the apparent failure of the Local Plan to protect in full the green separation areas between Northstowe and the villages of Longstanton and Oakington as per the Northstowe Development Framework which residents believed was an obligation that would be delivered in full. The Northstowe Area Action Plan contained obligations to provide Northstowe with a unique identity and sense of place and to provide protection to the rural character of both Longstanton and Oakington and the Heritage Society requests that these obligations are met unequivocally within the Local Plan.

*Submitted by Roger Hetherington  
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