

## THE PROCESS OF UNDERTAKING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### including

## HOW AND WHY DECISIONS WERE TAKEN

### 1. DECIDING TO UNDERTAKE A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Milton Keynes Council Core Strategy, adopted in 2013, set out the need for 1760 new dwellings in the rural area of Milton Keynes between 2010 and 2026. Newport Pagnell is the largest of three key settlements in the rural area, with a good level of existing infrastructure, and close proximity to central Milton Keynes. The Milton Keynes Local Plan, adopted in 2005, had identified a strategic reserve site in Newport Pagnell for housing development after 2011. Because it was obvious that significant development would take place in the town, Newport Pagnell Town Council decided that it was important that residents had a voice in relation to how, where and what development would take place. Initially, the Town Council was offered two options to contribute to development planning in Newport Pagnell. Either the Town Council could assist Milton Keynes Council in writing a Newport Pagnell Chapter within Plan MK (the emerging new local plan) or the Town Council could develop a Neighbourhood Plan. At first, at a Town Council meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2012, the Town Council took the view that inclusion in Plan MK would be a good enough vehicle to express the views of residents but it became apparent, after several meetings of the Steering Group, that the options for development were numerous and that a chapter in Plan MK would not provide sufficient detail to meet the needs of the Town. Accordingly, at a Town Council meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2013, the Town Council reversed the original decision, and agreed on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Prior to this period the Town Council had also engaged in setting a vision for the Town Council, and during a vision setting meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013, the Town Council agreed on the following pillars of change to meet the vision:

- Keeping and enhancing the vibrancy of the Town Centre
- Encouraging more and better events
- Creating further off-street parking
- Developing the Town's Heritage offerings
- Expanding leisure and sporting facilities in the town.

These important pillars were carried forward into the development of a Neighbourhood Plan.

### 2. SETTING UP A STEERING BODY AND DETERMINING THE PROGRAMME

On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2013, a Steering Group was established to start work on the Newport Pagnell Chapter in Plan MK. Initially this group comprised wholly of councillors, but over the next few months local residents who showed interest in the plan were invited to join.

At the initial meetings of the Steering Group an urban characterisation study was undertaken, splitting Newport Pagnell into 15 zones. This allowed the group to define the character of each area, and to determine where change was likely to occur.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the evidence base for details the characteristics of each zone.

Once the decision was taken by Full Council to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan, a programme was established, detailing the conclusion date of the project and the steps along the way. However, because of delays on consultation dates, particularly timing to avoid school holidays, there was significant slippage of the programme, resulting in a 5 month delay. Nevertheless, progress towards the end objective was steady along the way.

### **3. ISSUES CONSULTATION**

An open public consultation on issues surrounding development in Newport Pagnell was held on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> December 2013, backed up by a survey sent out to all households in the Town, with responses received either electronically or in hard copy. This consultation set out to explain the requirements of the Core Strategy for development in the rural areas, what a Neighbourhood Plan was and why the Town Council were undertaking one. It defined the different zones in the town, the characteristics of each zone, the Town Council pillars of vision and how these could apply to a Neighbourhood Plan. The public was asked to comment on each zone, in terms of its scope or constraints for development.

The consultation was open format, without a prescriptive attempt to limit the public's thinking on issues or scope of the Neighbourhood Plan. As anticipated a wide range of responses was received, ranging from the need to bring new retail stores into the town, to the issues and concerns people had with development in each area. A significant finding from this consultation was that, whilst the land highlighted in the Strategic Reserves allocation by Milton Keynes Council, known as the Tickford Fields Farm Strategic Reserve site, was not contentious, the area of land known as Portfields Farm, identified in the Strategic Housing and Land Allocation Assessment was viewed by the public as deeply unsuitable for development purposes. Two other issues were raised repeatedly during the consultation:

1. If a significant number of new homes were built, where would the children go to school, as school places were perceived to be at a premium.
2. It was already very difficult to get an appointment with a local doctor, and it was believed that new housing would make it worse.

### **4. DECIDING ON THE SCOPE and DURATION OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

This consultation informed the Neighbourhood Plan scoping report and it was approved by the steering group on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

Initially it was felt that the appropriate duration of this plan was to 2026, which was the same timeframe as the Milton Keynes Council Core Strategy. However, since then Milton Keynes Council has begun development of PlanMK, which carries forward the Core Strategy to 2031. The Neighbourhood Plan duration will therefore be from date of adoption to 2031.

### **5. DESIGNATING THE PLAN AREA**

Whilst it was apparent that some zones in Newport Pagnell (zones 6, 8, 9,10) were already well developed residential areas with little scope for change, it was nevertheless agreed that the Plan Area should be the whole of the parish of Newport Pagnell, as residents who lived

within these areas would be impacted upon by developments in adjacent zones. On the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013 Newport Pagnell Town Council applied to Milton Keynes Council for area designation of the whole of the parish of Newport Pagnell as the Neighbourhood Plan Area. This was granted on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

## **6. APPLYING FOR FUNDING AND ASSISTANCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

One of the issues that exercised the steering group in the development of the plan was whether or not the Town Council would have to pay for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan. It was felt that as Milton Keynes Council had already designated one of the key areas for development as a strategic reserve site, this burden should fall either to the developer of this site, or to the principle planning authority. Advice was sought on this matter from the Department of Communities and Local Government, which resulted in the response that if the Town Council was developing the plan then the cost would fall to the Town Council. During the same period it became obvious that Milton Keynes Council would not be implementing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and that therefore any formal guaranteed benefits accruing from the development of a Neighbourhood Plan would fall by the wayside. A response to the Town Council from Nick Bowles, Planning Minister at the time, confirmed that it was not obligatory for principal authorities to adopt CIL charging regimes.

Newport Pagnell Town Council applied to Localities for assistance both in plan development and in providing a designated sum for undertaking a sustainability appraisal and any concomitant SEA. In September 2013, it was confirmed that assistance in development of the plan had been agreed by Localities. However the grant funding had not. Rachel Hogger, Planning Aid England Advisor – East of England and East Midlands attended a meeting of the steering group on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013, and it was agreed that the best use of her time was to evaluate the plan and policy statements when they were written, to advise on revisions needed before formal submission, and to consider whether the evidence base collated by the Town Council sufficiently supported the policy statements developed as part of the Plan. On 25<sup>th</sup> January 2014 the Town Council applied again for funding from Localities, this time based upon the costs deriving from consultation with the public on the Plan, and on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014 received a grant of £6,597 to help to defray consultation expenses.

## **7. DEVELOPING THE SCOPING REPORT**

As eleven different development sites were available, it was felt that it was necessary to consider the impact of development in each of the sites, the site constraints, and access or deliverable capacity of each site with regards to facilities. Although not a necessity in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Steering Group took the view that in this instance, it would be advisable to designate specific sites for housing development, and to suggest preferred uses for the rest.

Other aims and objectives of undertaking the Neighbourhood Plan were to:

- set out the phasing of possible development across the next 10 years and beyond.
- seek to determine what development was deliverable within the timeframe of the plan.
- identify the need for additional sporting and recreational facilities, leisure facilities, allotments, play areas and green areas within the town's parish boundaries in the period defined by the plan end date.
- examine the need for additional school places.
- assess transports needs and undertake a sustainable transport plan including:

- Identify the requirements for roads and highways with additional development
- determine whether there was or would be significant traffic congestion
- Investigate congestion/or parking deficiencies near homes, schools, and recreational facilities.
- examine the need for additional and improved cycle routes and cycle parking provision within the town.
- examine provision of existing doctors' surgeries in the Town, and how these would cope with extended demand from occupants in new housing.
- investigate:
  - Whether there was a need to encourage new buildings for employment use, or protect existing employment land and buildings.
  - Whether existing employment sites would benefit from redevelopment.
  - Whether the aspirations of the Newport Pagnell Partnership could be supported through specific planning policies.
- review environmental matters such as flooding and noise
- examine ways of making the town centre more attractive to shoppers, by improving cycle access and parking, and promoting of the town's history.

## **8. MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY**

As it became apparent that this Neighbourhood Plan would consist of more than determining the appropriate number of new homes for the area it became more and more important to maintain excellent communication links with the Local Planning Authority, Milton Keynes Council. The need for site allocation, suitable infrastructure, and the concerns raised by residents during the issues consultation, were complexities which required the two levels of local authority to work together closely. The Senior Planning Officer who was delegated the task of working with the Town Council on developing this plan came to all Neighbourhood Planning meetings, and acted as a source of communication between other departments at the Unitary Authority such as Schools, Planning and Highways, to ensure cross-authority and multi-service implications were considered. Discussion with the Local Planning Authority, based on the results of the Stage 1 community engagement activity showed conformity with existing planning policies.

## **9. DEVELOPING OPTIONS**

### **9.1 Site assessment: constraints, deliverability and opportunities<sup>2</sup>**

The following sites were considered.

- North Crawley Road Industrial Estate
- Tickford Fields Farm Strategic Reserve Site
- Tickford Fields Farm East Site
- Marsh End Road/Tongwell Lane Site
- Land east of Willen Road
- Portfields Site
- Kickles Farm Site
- Police Station Site
- Tesco Site
- Mustard Factory Site
- Bury Common

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 3 for the Collective Site Assessment.

Of the sites for consideration, the single most suitable site was the small brownfield site, known as the North Crawley Road Industrial Estate, capable of absorbing around 80 homes. On its own this would be insufficient to meet the needs of the Core Strategy. The next most suitable site was the Tesco site, but deliverability of housing was a problem as there was in place existing planning permission for building a store. This planning permission was about to expire in October 2014, but Tesco then started some build activities, thereby keeping the planning permission alive indefinitely. However, on 8 January 2015, Newport Pagnell Town Council was advised that Tesco had decided the new store would not be built. However, even combining all the brownfield sites in the town would not provide sufficient homes to meet the requirements of the Core Strategy. The sites with the next lowest number of constraints with suitability to provide good infrastructure on site were both the Tickford Fields Farm sites, and although other sites scored slightly higher in terms of existing nearby infrastructure, the number of constraints on these sites was higher. Since the Tickford Fields Farm Strategic Reserve site was already designated as a strategic reserve site for housing after 2011, the Neighbourhood Plan would not conform to the principal authorities planning policy if this site was removed from the Neighbourhood Plan. Further, this site was capable of taking all the rural housing required by the Core Strategy, whereas most other sites were not.

Taking all of the constraints and infrastructure requirements into account the Town Council approved at a meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2014, the following sites for housing development, in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan ready for consultation with the public on preferred sites in the Town:

- The North Crawley Road Industrial Estate
- The Tickford Fields Farm Strategic Reserve
- The Tickford Fields Farm East site
- The Marsh End Road/Tongwell Lane site.

In January 2015, 3 additional sites were put forward for housing by landowners to the Milton Keynes Council site allocations consultation. These sites were the London Road Site, a site that formed a small portion of the area known as the land east of Willen Road and the Nampak site. Milton Keynes Council had already suggested that they would dismiss the former two sites, as these were deep in the flood zone. The Steering Group considered this and rejected these sites too. A further site that came forward in the site allocations consultation was the Nampak site, in which there is current occupancy. This site was also sandwiched between two other pieces of employment land. For these reasons, and because of the lack of additional employment land available the Steering Group proposed that this site should not form part of the sites allocated for housing in the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **9.2 Option on housing development numbers**

There were several options for the Town Council to recommend at the forthcoming consultation, these being:

- A build of only the minimum number of rural dwellings required by the Core Strategy on the Tickford Fields Farm Strategic Reserve site.
- A build of approximately 80 homes on the North Crawley Road Industrial Estate, (part of which also contributed to the strategic reserve area) to remove an existing eyesore in the form of a derelict industrial estate, in which the land owner had been unable to let a single unit for at least 2 years, plus a build of some housing to make up the minimum number of dwellings required by the Core Strategy on the Tickford Fields Farm Strategic Reserve site.
- A build of approximately 80 homes on the North Crawley Road Industrial Estate, which site formed a natural entrance into the strategic reserve site, as well as building homes on the whole of the Tickford Fields Farm Strategic Reserve Site, (some 600 in total) plus building

homes on the Tickford Fields Farm East site (a further 600 homes.) This totality of homes would lead to the need for the development of a pre- and primary school on site, and a local centre to support the estate.

- A build on both the North Crawley Road Industrial Estate, and on the Tickford Fields Farm Strategic Reserve, prior to the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period, with the intention of opening up the Tickford Fields Farm East Site after 2031, whilst at the same time creating a development brief on the whole area encompassed by all these site, to link infrastructure requirements

Taken together, the Tickford Fields Farm sites were capable of delivering more homes than were required by the Core Strategy (approx. 1200 in total) as well as significant infrastructure in the form of a local centre, pre- and primary school, local park and Neighbourhood Play Area (NEAP.) A local centre might also conceivably support the development of additional medical facilities above shops. The Town Council therefore took the unusual step of recommending more homes that were required to be delivered by the Core Strategy, and set out to consult with the public on the latter two options as the preferred options.

## **10. CONSULTATION ON OPTIONS: SITES, HOUSING NUMBERS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Having reviewed the site constraints, deliverability and opportunities, the Town Council resolved on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2014 to put forward the following sites for housing development at the site allocations consultations.

- The North Crawley Road Industrial Estate because this was derelict, an eyesore and blot on the community, and had not been let for an extended period of time.
- The Tickford Fields Farm Strategic Reserve Site because this was already a Strategic Reserve Site, identified in the Local Plan, and would meet the rural housing target of the Core Strategy.
- The Tickford Fields Farm East Site because this would allow for “whole” site development, creating a level of infrastructure that would meet the demands of large scale new build, including a new pre-and primary school, a local centre, a NEAP and park, and potentially also a new medical facility.
- The Marsh End Road/Tongwell Lane site because alongside this development, would come additional land to extend sporting and recreational facilities adjacent to a large existing sports ground.

Three open door public consultations were held, on the 20<sup>th</sup> September, the 4<sup>th</sup> October and the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2014, at various venues around the town. 379 people came to these consultations, completing 277 questionnaires. The results from analysing the questions were extremely clear. Of the 277 completed questionnaires, 194 respondents were in favour of the site allocation plan and 54 were in favour of part of the site allocation plan. The Marsh End Road/Tongwell Lane site was far less favourably regarded for development than any of the other three listed above, with people citing high levels of traffic on Marsh End Road/Willen Road, poor access via Tongwell Lane, and loss of wildlife habitat as issues important to them. There was a much lower set of resistance to building on the Tickford Fields Farm sites, even though these were also greenfield sites, mainly because this was seen as a development that: ‘made sense’ in being able to provide for its own infrastructure needs, was linked to a road network with easier access in and out of Newport Pagnell than the Willen Road or Wolverton Road entries, and whilst still being part of the town was sufficiently isolated from existing residential housing to cause fewer problems. The prevailing view was ‘if we have to have housing, then these are the best sites for it.’

There was less clarity provided in the answer to the question related to whether or not there was a requirement to phase in the development in two distinct build periods, i.e. development of half the site only after the expiry date of the Neighbourhood Plan. Many residents felt it was necessary to develop the whole site at the same time to provide the appropriate level of infrastructure for this site.

Residents also had a great resistance to development on Bury Common – but as the Town Council had already screened out this site, owing to a very significant level of constraints, these concerns were easily allayed.

At a Town Council Meeting dated 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014, it was agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan would designate sites for housing as follows:

- The North Crawley Road Industrial Estate (capacity 80 homes)
- The Tickford Fields Farm Strategic Reserve Site (capacity over 600 homes)
- The Tickford Fields Farm East Site (capacity over 600 homes)
- The Police Station Site (capacity 15 homes – possibly for sheltered housing)
- The Mustard Factory Site (capacity 5 homes)

The following site was added at a meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2015, after having received a letter from Tesco stating that they did not intend proceeding with the build of a store on this site.

- Tesco Site – Mixed use housing/employment

The remaining sites were to be designated as not for housing, with the Town Council preference for development as follows:

- Land East of Willen Road – Linear Park Extension/Recreation.
- Marsh End Road/Tongwell Lane – Remain as Agricultural.
- Portfields Farm – Remain as Agricultural
- Kickles Farm – Remain as Agricultural
- Bury Common – To remain as common land

Having established that residents in general supported the above plan, in December 2014 Newport Pagnell Town Council set out to explore whether there was a need to identify specific policy statements for types/size of housing, levels of social/shared ownership housing within the 30% affordable housing policy of Milton Keynes Council, whether a percentage of new homes should be set aside for first refusal or occupation by Newport Pagnell residents and whether there was a need for further employment land to be set aside to replace the loss of employment land on the North Crawley Road Industrial Estate and to supplement the additional housing in providing local jobs for local people.

## **11. OTHER CONSULTATIONS**

The Town Council engaged in other consultations, details of which are set in The Consultation Statement. The following groups were consulted:

- 11.1 Schools in the area
- 11.2 Sports Clubs in the area
- 11.3 NHS/MKC Medical Team
- 11.4 Doctors' surgeries
- 11.5 Landowners
- 11.6 Some developers
- 11.7 Estate Agents in the area

- 11.8 MKC Schools Planning Team
- 11.9 Milton Keynes Highways
- 11.10 Milton Keynes Employment Officers
- 11.11 Business Association
- 11.12 Newport Pagnell Partnership
- 11.13 Adjoining Parish Councils.
- 11.14 Affected Utility Companies
- 11.15 The Environmental Agency
- 11.16 Local Businesses

## **12. BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE AND USING THE EVIDENCE TO WRITE THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AND POLICY STATEMENTS.**

### **12.1. School places**

A principal area to address in building the evidence base was to establish whether the public perception on shortage of schooling places was accurate. An analysis of school placements was undertaken.

What was clear from this analysis was that a number of places at schools in Newport Pagnell had been taken up by people from outside the catchment areas, as the schools in Newport Pagnell are regarded highly. However, when projecting numbers of new pupils using the LEA School Planning formula, a point would be arrived at where existing schools would lose the capacity to take on children from within the catchment area. School occupancy was the single most important issue raised by residents during both consultations, although this was closely followed by concerns about medical provision. Whilst the evidence showed that at the moment there was capacity in some schools, with places being taken up by out-of-catchment students, a large-scale build would put significant pressure on both primary and secondary school places. Pre-school places were already very close to capacity.

More specifically, taking different levels of education into account:

#### **12.1.1 Pre School places.**

The four pre-schools in the area were running at 86% occupancy, and the only maintained nursery school was 87% full. Full day nursery/domestic childcare on premises was 91% full.

#### **12.1.2 Primary School places**

This was a mixed picture, with some capacity particularly at the Tickford Park School. The other schools were fairly full, with some limited out-of-catchment placements. Changes between the 2001 census and the 2011 census were analysed. This indicated a significant increase in the percentage of 0-4 year olds in the area (10.4%) who would be feeding into the school system in years to come, although in recent times, the numbers of current school going children had dropped. Various scenarios were discussed with the Schools Development team at Milton Keynes Council, outlining the effect of building 600 or 1200 new homes in the area. It became apparent that whilst 1200 new homes would definitely trigger the build of a new primary school, 600 homes would not, although with new housing at this level schools were likely to be stretched to capacity and potentially beyond capacity.

#### **12.1.3 Secondary School places**

The evidence here reflected an impending shortage of places as additional housing development took place. Empirical evidence was received which showed that, because the school was sited

across two campuses, one in Olney, that some senior school students who lived in Newport Pagnell were not currently given access to the campus closest to where they lived.

#### 12.1.4 Sixth Form places

Consultation with the head of the local senior school provided information that there was a shortage of space for sixth form students, and that the ideal solution would be to move the sixth form elsewhere. The evidence showed that the Ousedale Newport Pagnell Campus was already full of sixth form students, and that the Olney Campus did not take secondary school students.

School provision was the most important factor in deciding that the Neighbourhood Plan should provide land for 1300/1400 homes, rather than be limited to the number of homes required by the Core Strategy. This model of building the community around the hub of a new school is an excellent way to develop community cohesion, through parent groups who get to know one another. It is also the best way to avoid build-up of school related traffic – a problem which occurs at other schools in Newport Pagnell partly owing to out-of-catchment placement. However, on the issue of secondary school places and sixth form places, it was necessary to discuss further provision on the Olney Campus site, as there was no room on the Newport Pagnell site for expansion.

#### Neighbourhood Plan Decision

To develop a housing site allocation policy which designates three adjoining sites, the North Crawley Road site, the Tickford Fields Farm East Site and the Tickford Fields Farm Strategic Reserve for housing, to trigger the build of a new pre-and primary school.

To set out a school building policy including provision for a ‘kiss and drop’ facility, and cycle routes leading to the school.

To discuss secondary schooling provision with Olney Town Council.

#### Evidence base

Setting & School organisation framework and school place framework provided by the Local Planning Authority

School role numbers provided by Schools.

## **12.2 Health Care**

Investigation into a significant number of comments that “it was impossible to get a doctor’s appointment,” did not bear out the view that there was a shortage of doctors. Indeed the current numbers of doctors seemed adequate under the NHS guidelines of 2500 patients per doctor, being only 1884 patients per doctor. Localised problems such as poor appointment booking systems, a host of temporary doctors in the form of locums, and inadequate facilities for one surgery in particular seemed to be the root causes of such difficulties. The other major surgery also cited facility space as a problem, and sought a solution of moving supplementary services away from the main hub of general practitioners. The addition of another 1400 new homes in the area would require only 1 more doctor, but clearly additional facilities were an issue. It would be difficult to build into any Neighbourhood Plan the requirement for a developer to build a new surgery on site, without having approval from the NHS for this step, but the Town Council sought a way around this by providing a development brief which includes the need to provide well-being facilities on site which could accommodate a GP Surgery and/or other medically related facilities.

#### Neighbourhood Plan Decision

To require the developer of the Tickford Fields Farm Site and the Tickford Fields Strategic Reserve Site to place a health and well-being facility on site.

Evidence Base

NHS national statistics on GP provision which is 1 GP to 2500 patients.

Number of GPs part and full time in Newport Pagnell.

The Beds & MK Healthcare Review 2014

**12.3 General Population Issues**

This has been reviewed looking at changes in the census figures, as well as the social atlas information to see how the population is changing, and the demands this will place on the town. (i.e. the need for affordable housing, or accommodation for the elderly).

Information available here indicated both an ageing population and a new crop of young pre-school children as significant factors. This suggests that as the ageing population moves to alternative sheltered accommodation homes are being purchased or let to young families.

The statistics on affordable homes within the borough show a definite need for more affordable housing, but feedback from consultations has also indicated that there is a distinct need for shared ownership properties, which is higher than elsewhere in the borough.

There are also indications in the data which show that, taken against the rest of the borough, Newport Pagnell residents are slightly less physically active. This may be a factor of the age profile and/or socio economic profile.

Neighbourhood Plan Decision

To develop a policy that would split the borough's 30% affordable housing policy into 10% shared ownership and 20% social rented housing.

To develop a policy that would allocate some of the affordable housing to those people with a Newport Pagnell association.

To develop a policy on play area provision

To develop a policy on pre-school provision

Evidence Base

The socio, economic profile and census 2001 and 2011

Ethnicity percentages across parishes in Newport Pagnell

2011 Census Estate and Settlement Profiles

Population age in percentages across parishes

Number of bedrooms MK wards

Unemployment Summary MK June 2013

**12.4 Employment**

Employment was examined through a questionnaire to residents, and by reviewing the employment survey undertaken by Milton Keynes Council in 2015. This survey clearly showed that there is more than enough employment allocated land in Milton Keynes to cater for the 1400 new homes in Newport Pagnell. The area is as a whole, commuter driven, with the car being the principal method of reaching employment regions.

The issue then to be addressed was, is more employment land needed in Newport Pagnell itself? This question was particularly pertinent, in that some employment land would be lost by allocating the derelict North Crawley Road Industrial Estate for housing and by allocating the Tesco site for mixed residential/business use. Responses from residents did not flag employment as a significant problem because, whilst residents indicated that it would be desirable to have more employment land they were unable to pinpoint the type of employment land required. Discussions held with the employment consultants for Milton Keynes Council indicated that on the whole employment land in Newport Pagnell was not highly regarded, meeting rural needs but not meeting the type of requirements for modern offices or manufacturing space or business space that had been highlighted in their survey.<sup>3</sup> It was felt that expansion of such land would not contribute to the larger employment plan and that the scale of the opportunity for employment development in Newport Pagnell was not ideal. A site inspection of existing employment land indicated that there were three vacant units, which remained vacant for a period of several months. The agents for the land at the North Crawley Road Industrial Estate had been attempting to let the vacant facilities for over two years, without success. There was no direct communication with employers as to their requirements.

Milton Keynes Core Strategy outlines a requirement for 1.5 jobs for every new home built. However, Milton Keynes Council Policy CS3, on Employment Land Supply, does not allocate any land in Newport Pagnell for further employment, whilst still providing sufficient land to meet the requirements for employment in the Core Strategy. There is no separate rural employment policy, as there is a separate housing policy for the rural areas. Therefore, despite the loss of some limited and derelict employment land in the North Crawley Road Industrial site, the only site where the Neighbourhood Plan includes an allocation towards future employment land is the Tesco site, on which the Town Council have since been advised that Tesco does not intend opening a new store. This site is currently designed as employment land although before its purchase by Tesco, a plan had been approved for housing on the site. Nor does the Neighbourhood Plan seek to manage employment space in the Town Centre, by increasing or decreasing the existing retail allocation. There will be some employment generated through the building of a new pre- and primary school and local centre on the Tickford Fields Farm sites.

#### Neighbourhood Plan Decision

Not to develop any policies around employment apart from allocating the Tesco site for mixed housing/employment.

#### Evidence Base

Local Employment and Industry information provided by the Local Planning Authority  
 The Local Investment Plan.  
 The MKC Unemployment Summary 2014  
 Analysis of Employment Types in Newport Pagnell 2011.  
 Newport Pagnell Commercial Units available provided by the Local Planning Authority  
 Change of use applications in Newport Pagnell for the last 5 years  
 Survey for residents on business needs  
 Commercial Units available - visible check numbers of available properties.  
 Non-residential properties in NP  
 Commissioned report on businesses in MKC  
 The Core Strategy 2013/Local Plan 2005-2011 and emerging Plan MK  
 MK Northern Expansion Area Development Framework Plan SPG Adopted May 2004  
 MK Eastern Expansion Area Development Framework Adopted October 2005

<sup>3</sup> See the evidence base for the Employment Survey

## 12.5 Housing

A survey undertaken on housing needs shows an anticipated demand for types of new housing as follows:

### Neighbourhood Plan Decision

To develop a policy that would split the borough 30% affordable housing policy into 10% shared ownership and 20% social rented housing.

Not to develop a policy that determines the appropriate mix of housing sizes.

To develop a policy that retains 5% of affordable housing for local people for a period of 6 months.

To develop a policy requiring a local centre for shopping.

### Evidence base

Local Housing analysis provided by the Local Planning Authority

PPS3 – Housing

The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2013

The Affordable Housing in Rural Settlements analysis 2013

The Draft Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 provided by MKC

Newport Pagnell Housing Figures since 2000, provided by the Local Planning Authority

Number of Bedrooms MK Wards report

Current National Policy on Housing Mix

MKC Housing Annual Report 2013

Flood map and defences

The 2001 and 2011 Census

The Milton Keynes Council Strategic Land Allocation Development Framework – draft SPD June 2012

The Milton Keynes Council Strategic Housing and Land Availability Assessment

The Core Strategy 2013/Local Plan 2005 and emerging Plan MK

The Milton Keynes Council Housing needs survey and housing waiting list

Consultation with land owners and assessment of deliverability of housing per site

The agricultural land use classification maps provided by Milton Keynes Council

## 12.6 Leisure and Recreation

Consultation with residents, sports clubs, the Newport Pagnell Partnership and other interested parties and statistics on appropriate standard provision taken from Milton Keynes Council and the Sport England website have led to the following list of infrastructure requirements to support the above levels of housing development. Infrastructure requirements, are:

- A new Neighbourhood Play Area, complete with Local Park on combined housing development site.
- A financial contribution for off-site playing pitch provision.
- Upgrade of open space quality within the town.
- Enhancement of existing play provision

### Neighbourhood Plan Decision

To develop a policy detailing infrastructure requirements.

Evidence base

Consultation on infrastructure requirements  
 Milton Keynes Council Sports and Leisure Strategy.  
 Milton Keynes Council Playing Fields Strategy  
 Milton Keynes Council Play Areas Strategy  
 Playing Pitch Provision Sport England  
 Milton Keynes Local Plan policy L3 and Appendix L3.

**12.7 Conservation, Heritage and Environmental Issues**

The principal issues considered here are the preservation and enhancement of the Town's built heritage, and a consideration of whether there are environmental issues which impact on new development.

Neighbourhood Plan Decisions

To develop a policy calling for a development brief for the principal development sites, including flood protection measures.

To develop a policy requiring an uplift in the town's heritage offerings.

To exclude protected land (Bury Common) from housing.

Evidence Base

Heritage Sites report  
 Milton Keynes Council Local Plan Heritage Policies HE1 – HE6 inclusive.  
 The Conservation Area Review 2010  
 The Listed Buildings Schedule  
 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990  
 Scheduled Ancient Monuments record  
 Tree Preservation Orders  
 Community/Village Greens  
 Wildlife Sites and Notable Species  
 Flood Risk map  
 The Town Council's Vision and Pillars of Change

**12.8 Transport Issues and Sustainable Transport**

In considering transport issues the Neighbourhood Plan has looked at:

- Impact on gateways into the town
- Bus routes
- Cycle routes
- Town centre parking
- Schools parking

12.8.1 Two of the main roads from the town, Marsh End Road/Willen Road and Wolverton Road, both carry significant traffic, with serious congestion during peak hours. The exit through Tickford Street also carries heavy traffic, but the evidence shows this is not as bad as either of the other two exits. <sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See the evidence base for traffic monitoring statistics.

- 12.8.2 A development brief for the combined Tickford Fields Farm site will require a bus route through the site with bus shelters, signage, etc.
- 12.8.3 A development on the combined Tickford Fields Farm sites would also require a cycle track/pedestrian route to adjoin existing routes into the Town Centre, whereas this was not the case from the development areas to the south and west of the Town. Such provision could also include the need for interim seating.
- 12.8.4 A parking survey was undertaken by the Partnership which clearly showed a significant shortfall in parking in the Town Centre, particularly long term (more than 2 hour) parking.
- 12.8.5 A survey of existing cycle routes throughout the town demonstrated a lack of a cohesive network of tracks.

### Neighbourhood Plan Decisions

To develop a sustainable transport policy including cycle/pedestrian route provision.

To require the development of a development brief for the combined development sites, requiring three access routes into the development and a circular bus route through the site.

To develop a town centre parking contribution policy.

To require all developments to contribute towards sustainable transport.

### Evidence base

Town Centre Parking Survey

Site Constraints details showing distance from town centre and proximity to bus routes.

Newport Pagnell Sustainable Transport Plan

Milton Keynes Council Local Plan Policy T15 on parking

Milton Keynes Council Local Plan Policies T1, T3 and T4 on Sustainable Transport

## **13. CONDUCTING A SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL**

Throughout the site allocation, evidence review and decision on options, the Town Council remained cognisant of sustainability issues. Each site was tested against sustainability issues, and where planning policy or consultation raised issues around sustainability, these were examined in depth. The effect on sustainability of the different options for numbers of housing and timeframe of build were also considered.

## **14. SCREENING FOR STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Initial discussions with the Local Planning Authority led the Town Council to understand that a Strategic Environmental Assessment would not be required, despite the flooding issues surrounding the major development sites. This was later confirmed when the Town Council submitted the draft Plan for screening.

The

## **15. WRITING POLICIES FOR THE PLAN**

It was agreed that the following policies would be written to support the Neighbourhood Plan:

15.1 Policy NP1 Preferred Sites for Housing Development

15.2 Policy No NP2. Tickford Fields Estate Site Specific Policy

15.3 Policy No NP3. Tesco (former Aston Martin Works) Site Specific Policy

15.4 Policy NP4. Windfall Sites

15.5 Policy NP5. Affordable Housing and Tenure

15.6 Policy NP6. Cycle and Pedestrian Routes

15.7 Policy NP 7. Developer Contribution Policy

15.8 Policy No NP8. Playing Fields and Associated Development

## **16. APPROVAL OF THE PLAN AND CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

At a Steering Group Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2015, the plan was approved for recommendation to Full Council. Full Council approved the Neighbourhood Plan on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2015. This is followed by a consultation.

The formal six week consultation process involves:

- 16.1 A 6 week pre-submission consultation organised by Newport Pagnell Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The consultation is on the draft Plan that will be submitted to Milton Keynes Council. Affected stakeholders will be directly contacted by letter – including landowners, developers, Natural England, Environment Agency, English Heritage, statutory authorities e.g. water companies, who are affected, informing them that the consultation is running and providing them with the dates of the consultation and the response mechanism.
- 16.2 A copy is also being sent to the Local Planning Authority – Milton Keynes Council, who is at this stage a formal consultee, and to various departments in Milton Keynes Council, such as housing, schooling and highways.
- 16.3 The Town Council will review the representations received and amend the document as required before formally submitting the Plan.

## **17. SUBMISSION OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

- 17.1 The Town Council will then submit the Plan together with Consultation Statement, Basic Conditions Statement and other supplementary information deemed necessary such as evidence base documents. At this point Newport Pagnell Town Council can no longer alter the Plan.
- 17.2 The Local Planning Authority then publishes the document for a six week period. Any representations received on this consultation go straight to the examiner. The Local Planning Authority can also comment on its own consultation at this stage.

## **18. EXAMINATION AND DEALING WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM EXAMINATION.**

- 18.1 An examiner appointed for Plan
- 18.2 Documents and representations sent to the examiner.
- 18.3 The examiner decides on hearing sessions or written responses only

- 18.4 If a hearing is arranged, this will be advertised and sessions to make representation will be held.
- 18.5. The examiner provides his/her report.
- 18.6 The Town Council deals with the recommendations from the examiner's report.

## **19. REFERENDUM**

- 19.1 The Local Planning Authority organise a referendum, print ballot papers.
- 19.2 The Local Planning Authority puts together a referendum plan and advertises the referendum.
- 19.3 A referendum is held.

## **20. ADOPTION**

- 20.1 The Local Planning Authority makes the Plan.
- 20.2 The Local Planning Authority publishes the Plan