

## **Astwood and Hardmead Neighbourhood Plan, Reg 16 consultation responses**

**Luke Bacon**

I am a resident of Astwood and am writing to communicate my strong support for the draft NHP that has recently been published by Milton Keynes Council in under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The Neighbourhood Plan is clearly compliant with all relevant local and national policies, as confirmed by the Basic Conditions Statement.

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee (under Astwood and Hardmead Parish Council) have worked extremely hard to create this plan and have listened to residents' views at every stage. They have undertaken a full and detailed public consultation and provided clear evidence that the process has been conducted transparently and in accordance with all relevant legislation.

I am fully supportive of the Neighbourhood Plan as published and will certainly vote for it when it comes to referendum. It is regrettable (but no fault of residents or the Parish Council) that the plan process has been delayed due to COVID-19 and so it is all the more important that this plan now moves at pace through the remainder of the administrative process. I know that many residents of the village share our views and are 'itching' to get this to referendum so that we can formally confirm our support by voting for it.

There is no question that this plan enjoys broad support from residents (and rightly so).

Much of the undeveloped land around Astwood and Hardmead is owned by a small number of local landowners (some of whom do not live in the villages). This plan will provide residents and the Parish Council with much-needed grounds for greater influence in the scale and pace of development in this very rural area.

It is regrettable that, over the past year (and in particular since this Plan was first published in draft form) Astwood and Hardmead has seen a rapid succession of significant planning applications from landowners seeking to 'capitalise' on the delays to the Neighbourhood Plan process caused by COVID-19. The approval of any single one of these applications would represent significant and unjustified intensification of the currently undeveloped open countryside around the village (and a number of new dwellings far in excess of that allowed for by this plan, in accordance with local and national guidance). The Neighbourhood Plan would provide the village and its residents with a degree of protection against this, which is another reason I am so strongly supportive of it.