



**CASTLETHORPE  
PARISH COUNCIL**

# Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan



Castlethorpe  
Neighbourhood  
Plan 2015-2030

Submission  
Plan v2.13  
February 2016

# **Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030**

## **Pre-Submission Plan**

Published by Castlethorpe Parish Council for Pre-Submission Consultation under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42. February 2016

### **Contents**

**Foreword**

**List of Land Use Policies**

**1. Introduction**

**2. Community Views**

**3. Vision and Objectives**

**4. Land Use Policies**

**5. Implementation**

**Policies Map**

**Annex A: Evidence Base**

**Annex B: Green Spaces Study**

**Annex C: Assets of Community Value**

# Foreword

I am very pleased to introduce our new Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan is important because it defines how we want our village to look over the next 15 years in terms of development, building design, important buildings to be protected and local Green Spaces. The Plan is powerful because, while it complies with national and Milton Keynes Planning Policies, it defines local policies which must be followed by Milton Keynes Council when considering planning applications. It has taken a considerable amount of time and effort to produce the Plan and we were fortunate to obtain a generous “front-runner” grant which has enabled us to engage professional help to write the Plan. We have also sought the views of our residents to ensure that the Plan reflects their wishes. There were a number of meetings open to the public following the initial public meeting. In early 2014, we held several Open Sessions at the Village Hall to explain the purpose of the Plan and get comments from residents which we used to construct a village survey. The survey was done in the Autumn and, since then, we have been writing the Plan in the necessary “planning speak” based on the responses. Although about one in six homes in Castlethorpe is affordable and there are nine low-cost homes with planning permission in Station Yard, 83% of

respondents to the survey indicated a desire for additional housing with support for mainly smaller as well as some larger homes but with particular emphasis on affordable and retirement/sheltered homes. However, there are no sites remaining within the existing settlement boundary for additional housing. Following issue of the Plan for review, a response was received from Carington Estates asking that the field we call “Maltings 2” be designated for housing. This site is bounded by Paddock Close, Maltings Field, the railway and the extension of Fox Covert Lane. We felt that our Neighbourhood Plan should designate this field for housing of the type requested in the survey and that the settlement boundary should be amended to include Maltings 2. Finally, we still have work to do on a Parish Plan. Unlike the Neighbourhood Plan, which is a Planning document, the Parish Plan will be a statement of improvements and projects that residents and our various sports and social organisations would like the Parish Council to undertake. This follows on from the very successful 2008 Parish Plan. I would like to thank everyone who has helped to put the plan together and especially those who gave comments at the Open Days and completed the village survey. Your contribution has been invaluable in helping us to create the future for our parish.

**Philip Ayles, Chair, Castlethorpe Parish Council**  
February 2016



# List of Land Use Policies

1	Castlethorpe Development Boundary
2	Land at Maltings Field, Castlethorpe
3	Design Guidance
4	Community Facilities
4	Local Green Spaces
5	Car Parking for the Carrington Arms
7	Lodge Farm Business Centre and Balney Grounds
8	Cosgrove Leisure Park access
9	Surrounding Countryside & Landscape



# 1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Castlethorpe Parish Council (CPC) is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the area designated by the local planning authority, Milton Keynes Council (MKC), under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The designated area is shown in Plan A below.

1.2 The purpose of the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan (CNP) will be to make planning policies that can

be used to determine planning applications in the area. In some cases, its policies will encourage development proposals for the benefit of the local community. In others, its policies will aim to protect the special character of the Parish.

1.3 Neighbourhood Plans provide local communities with the chance to shape the future development of their areas. Once approved at a referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan becomes a statutory part of the



**PLAN A: The Designated Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Area**

development plan for the area and will carry significant weight in how planning applications are decided. Neighbourhood Plans can therefore only contain land use planning policies that can be used for this purpose. This often means that there are important issues of interest to the local community that cannot be addressed in a Neighbourhood Plan if they are not directly related to planning.

1.4 Although there is considerable scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, Neighbourhood Plans must meet some 'basic conditions'. These are:

- Is the Plan consistent with national planning policy?
- Is the Plan consistent with local planning policy?
- Does the Plan promote the principles of sustainable development?
- Has the process of making of the Plan met the requirements of European environmental standards?

1.5 In addition, CPC must be able to show that it has properly consulted local people and other relevant organisations during the process of making its Neighbourhood Plan and has followed the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

1.6 These requirements will be tested by an independent examiner once the Neighbourhood Plan is finalised. If satisfied, the examiner will recommend to the MKC that the Plan goes to a referendum of the local electorate. If a simple majority of the turnout votes for the Plan then it becomes adopted as formal planning policy for the area.

## The Pre-Submission Plan

1.7 This Pre-Submission Plan is the opportunity for CPC to consult on the emerging policies and proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan. It has reviewed existing national and local planning policies and how they may affect this area. And it has already sought the local community's opinions on local planning issues that the Neighbourhood Plan might help address.

1.8 The contents of this Plan are therefore presented to

obtain the views of the local community and other organisations on its proposed vision, objectives and land use policies. The final version of the Plan will take into account the representations received on this version.

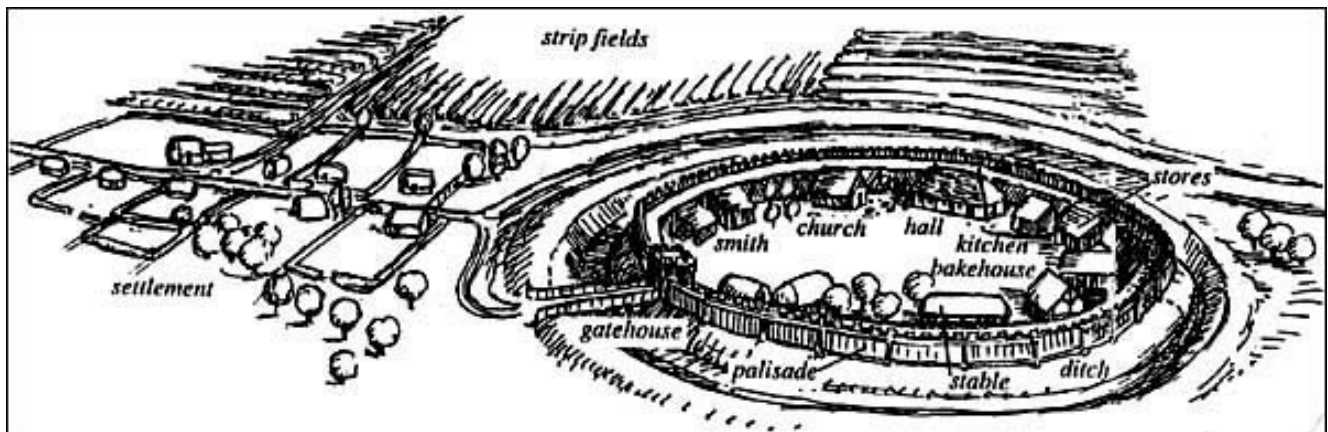
## History and Development of Castlethorpe Parish

1.9 Castlethorpe is a village with a population of around 1,100 near Milton Keynes, about three miles north of Stony Stratford and seven miles north of Milton Keynes City Centre. It is separated from the county of Northamptonshire by the River Tove. There is evidence that the area was inhabited as early as the Bronze Age, with a Bronze Age dagger being found in a nearby field. Roman jewellery was also discovered during the archaeological survey carried out during preparation work for a new housing development.

1.10 The village itself was first created around a motte and bailey castle built by Winemar the Fleming who was granted the manor of Hanslope by William I after the Norman Conquest. A settlement of servants and manual workers grew up around the castle and this became the village of Castlethorpe (thorp being the old Scandinavian for hamlet or secondary settlement).

1.11 The castle was destroyed in 1215 during the Baron's Revolt against King John. All that is left today is part of the moat of the former castle, which is preserved in a public open space as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, Castle Field, and in a play area in the old fish ponds of the castle.

1.12 Castlethorpe developed around the church and some traditional old stone cottages at the centre of the village which is now a Conservation Area. With the coming of the London and North-Western Railway in 1882, Castlethorpe enjoyed a prominent position on the West Coast line and the village expanded with new housing in Station Road and North Street. The village had its own station until it was closed in 1964. Castlethorpe ponds were an important water pickup for steam trains on the main line from Euston to the



**PLAN B: The settlement as it might have looked in the 11th Century**





**PLAN C: The Inner Bailey c. 1900**

Midlands and the North-West. The water tower that remains is one of only two in the country. The Grand Union Canal also runs by on the outskirts of the village, and it is a short walk along the towpath to the neighbouring village of Cosgrove.

1.13 Castlethorpe has always had a strong agricultural sector. However, the working farms are now at the edges of the village and have declined

in number over the past 20 years but still remain an important influence on the village. Two of the farms have diversified into business units and this now plays a significant part in the local economy.

1.14 The development of Milton Keynes itself and the opening of Milton Keynes Central railway station in 1982 created opportunities for both short- and long-distance commuting. Most of the working villagers now commute out of the village but, nevertheless, the village has retained its rural character and the local facilities critical to the existence of a local and thriving community.

### Facilities in the village

1.15 The community facilities in the village include a nursery, First School, the parish church of SS Simon and Jude, a village shop and Post Office, a public house (currently awaiting refurbishment) and Village Hall. The Village Hall is the centre for a number of community activities from Pre-School Group to short mat bowls and Women’s Institute.

A well-equipped sports ground includes a cricket and football pitch (both with well-established home teams) and a hard court area for tennis, football and basketball.



**PLAN D: Some photographs of Castlethorpe in days gone by**



## Environmental Designations

1.16 The main environmental designations in the parish are the variety of heritage assets in the village centre, notably the Scheduled Ancient Monument former castle area, the Conservation Area and a number of listed buildings of all grades.

## Planning Policy Context

1.17 The parish lies within Milton Keynes Council (MKC) in the County of Buckinghamshire but to the south adjoins the parishes of Hanslope, Haversham/Little Linford, Wolverton, all in the district of Milton Keynes.

1.18 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Government in 2012 is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans. The Neighbourhood Plan must demonstrate that it is consistent with the provisions of the NPPF. The following paragraphs of the NPPF are especially relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Supporting a prosperous rural economy (paragraph 28)
- Good design (58)
- Promoting healthy communities (70)
- Protecting local green spaces (76)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (109)
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (126)
- Neighbourhood planning (185)

1.19 MKC has planning policies and proposals that are helping to shape the strategy and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan as required by the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. The development plan currently comprises the 2013 Core Strategy and the saved policies of the 2005 Milton Keynes Local Plan. However the council have recently started preparing a review of the Core

Strategy to extend its strategic policies up to 2031. The Neighbourhood Plan will look to the reasoning and the evidence base of the emerging Core Strategy Review Milton Keynes Plan (Plan: MK).

The Milton Keynes Local Plan (2005)

1.20 The **2005 Milton Keynes Local Plan** contains a number of 'saved' policies that have a specific relevance to the Neighbourhood Plan and these are listed below:

- **Policy S1 General Principles (Strategic policy)**
- **Policy S9 Other Villages (Strategic policy)**
- **Policy S10 Open Countryside (Strategic policy)**
- **Policy D2 Design of Buildings**
- **Policy HE1 Protection of Archaeological Sites**
- **Policy HE2 Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (Listed Buildings)**
- **Policy HE5 Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building**
- **Policy HE6 Conservation Areas**
- **Policy T15 Parking Provision**
- **Policy T17 Traffic Calming**
- **Policy H1 Land Allocated for Housing**
- **Policy H2 Priority Housing Requirements**
- **Policy H4 Affordable Housing: Target and Site Thresholds**
- **Policy H6 Rural Housing Needs**
- **Policy E1 Protection of Existing Employment Land**
- **Policy L2 Protection of Public Open Space and Existing Facilities**
- **Policy C2 Loss of Community Facilities**

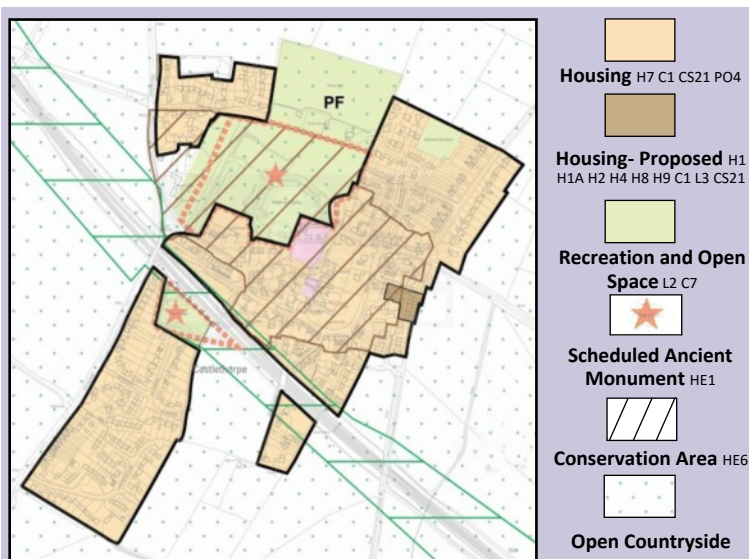
1.21 All of the strategic policies but the three above have been superseded by the adopted **2013 Core Strategy**. In many other respects, some of the non-strategic saved policies are out of date and some will need to be considered alongside the NPPF.

## Milton Keynes Core Strategy (2013)

1.22 The **Milton Keynes Core Strategy** (MKCS) was adopted in July 2013 and sets out the strategic

policies for MKC up to the year 2026. A Site Allocations Plan is currently being prepared to meet the need for future development in the rural areas. The most relevant of the Core Strategy policies for the Neighbourhood Plan are:

- **Policy CS1 Development Strategy** (defining the position of Castlethorpe village in the settlement hierarchy of the district)
- **Policy CS3 Employment Land Supply**
- **Policy CS9 Strategy for the Rural Area**
- **Policy CS10 Housing**
- **Policy CS12 Developing Successful Neighbourhoods**
- **Policy CS13 Ensuring High Quality, Well Designed Places**



PLAN E: Local Plan 2005 – Proposals Map of Castlethorpe



- Policy CS16 Supporting Small Businesses
- Policy CS17 Improving access to local services and facilities
- Policy CS19 The Historic and Natural Environment

## The Plan: MK

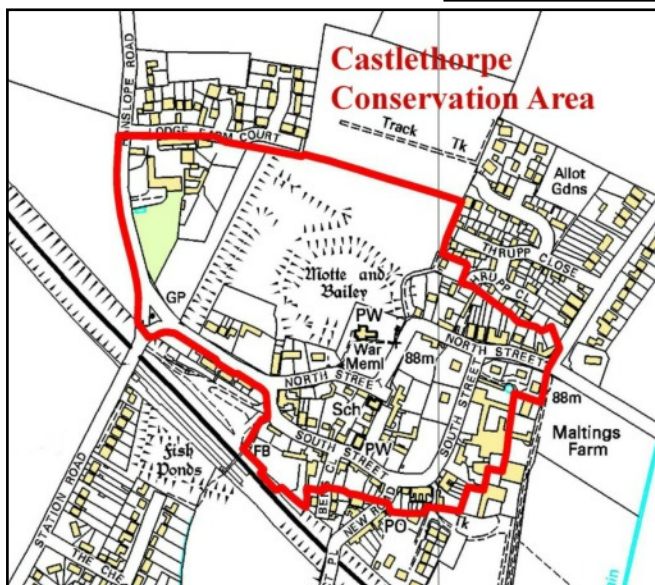
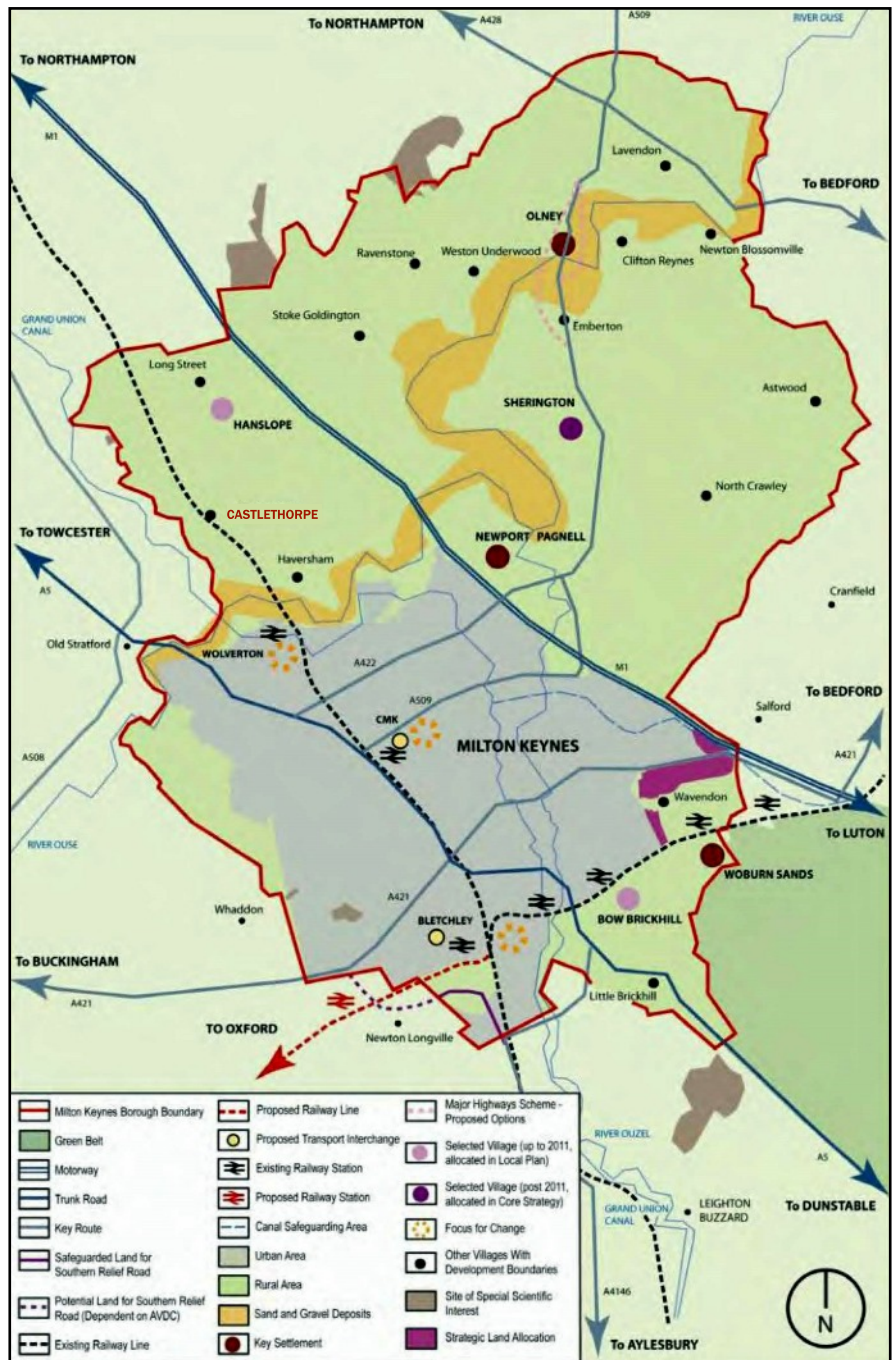
1.23 The Borough is currently collecting evidence for a new local plan called Plan: MK. This document will review the core strategy and set strategic planning policies until 2031 or later. The Neighbourhood Plan may look to some of the evidence informing this plan.

## Conservation Area

1.24 The central part of the village has special character and, in 1972, it was designated a Conservation Area under the powers of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971. Designation of a Conservation Area has the following objectives:

- To protect and enhance the appearance and character of the area
- To avoid neglect or despoliation due to unsympathetic development

1.25 The Neighbourhood Plan will further seek to sustain the above and to ensure that future development will respect the setting and view in and out of the Conservation Area to retain the character of the village.



PLAN F: Milton Keynes Core Strategy – Key Diagram

PLAN G: Castlethorpe Conservation Area

© Crown copyright and database rights (2012) Ordnance Survey 100019682

## 2. Community Views

2.1 The Parish Council has consulted the local community during the course of the Plan preparation process, and the Neighbourhood Plan is based upon the results of these consultations, which have included meetings, open days and community surveys.

2.2 A questionnaire was distributed throughout the village in 2014, as well as being available online. A summary has been prepared by a working group of residents and Parish Councillors from the responses and comments made. A total of 139 responses were received, 18 of which were second or third responses from the same household. It is reasonable to assume that 121 households responded out of a total of 470 in the parish, which is a household response rate of 26%.

2.3 The key headlines from the survey questions were:

- 69% of respondents thought it was important or very important that affordable homes are available.
- 74% of respondents thought it was important or very important that young people and key workers can afford to live in Castlethorpe.
- 54% of respondents thought Castlethorpe will need more homes by 2026.
- The percentage in favour of different types of home is as follows:
 

○ Smaller homes	69%
○ Larger family homes	53%
○ Affordable homes	63%
○ Homes for rent	33%
○ Homes for rent for local people	77%
○ Retirement/sheltered homes	73%
- Over 20 years, 83% of respondents thought that additional homes are appropriate for Castlethorpe. This would include individual plots as well as small scale developments.
- There were large majorities in favour of:
  - preserving the surrounding countryside and landscape
  - avoiding spoiling the look of the rural setting
  - providing sufficient infrastructure to support any new housing (e.g. school, water supply, recreation, road capacity etc.)
  - any new housing respecting the existing style and character of the village.
- It is not desirable for Castlethorpe to have any new settlement on its boundary.
- Castlethorpe should minimise light pollution and conserve energy by turning some street lighting off at reasonable times.
- As fuel costs are predicted to rise, new homes should have access to sufficient land for home growing, helping households manage their food bills.
- There is a small majority who object to renewable energy generation but, of the large minority that support it, most are against wind turbines but supportive of solar panels providing they are not intrusively sited.
- A large majority of respondents was hostile to building inside the settlement boundary. A small majority favoured commercial development outside the boundary though a small majority also wanted no further commercial development at all.
- Of those respondents who favoured some commercial development, only one respondent was in favour of warehousing and distribution, there was more support for light industrial units, general office / commercial and business start-up and even greater support for specialist sector (creative & media/science/marketing).
- The main concern was about increased traffic movements especially of HGVs caused by any future development.
- For new small employment buildings, responses were evenly spread among being away from all existing buildings, mixed in with homes or alongside existing employment.
- For medium and large new employment buildings, respondents did not want them mixed with new homes and, for larger buildings, respondents wanted them to be in completely new sites or alongside existing employment buildings.
- The main areas thought suitable were the Station Yard (if the currently approved residential development did not proceed) or at the existing business centres.

- More than 85% of respondents wanted to see the Carrington Arms re-opened with 6% against it and 8% don't know. The main uses were to retain as a pub, convert to a café / restaurant or use as a community facility. A small minority favoured residential development.
- A small majority of respondents was in favour of a pub/ club at the Sports Ground if the Carrington Arms was not reopened as a pub
- 84% of respondents did not want any new sport or play facilities.
- There was a wide range of comments but a common theme was that agriculture and countryside should be preserved around the village.
- 61% of respondents felt more traffic calming was needed and there were a lot of comments about excess speed. Suggestions included 20 mph areas in the village centre and in Shepperton Close, Station Road and Bullington End Road. There were also some concerns raised about hazards involving agricultural vehicle movements in North Street.
- Other responses mostly reiterated comments made elsewhere, covering topics such as the need for affordable housing, restricting social housing to those with a connection to the village, preserving the village, speeding, parking, dog fouling, repairing the Fishponds play area, moving the cycleway to Fox Covert Lane and improving the MKC landscaping service. These comments will be reviewed by the parish council to see if further action can be taken. Some are already ongoing actions.



# 3. Vision & Objectives

## Vision

3.1 The vision for Castlethorpe in 2030 is:

A visitor to Castlethorpe in 2030 would see incremental rather than revolutionary change from his previous visit in 2015. The approach to conservation would appear very similar but with a greater consistency in the detailing of items such as streetlights, bollards and waste bins. Any building modifications or extensions would have been made in a sympathetic manner in accordance with strict design guidelines to reflect the character of the village.

The visitor would be able to enjoy a drink at the Carrington Arms with no change of use permitted under its protection as a Community Facility. In summer, he might take his drink onto the green opposite with its restyled layout including additional and much needed parking facilities. On occasion, he might join village celebrations on the green. Opposite, the Village Hall would be as recognisable as it had been 140 years previously following its gift to the parish, after the village school had moved to its new position in 1891 where it still flourishes as Castlethorpe First School. The school looks across to the Norman church of SS Simon and Jude in its elevated position, surrounded by an impressive stone wall.

Outside the Conservation Area, the visitor would see new building development in the old Station Yard providing low cost housing and a mixed development, including affordable housing, in Maltings 2 where the settlement boundary has been amended. He would also see other infill housing at the corner of North Street and Fox Covert Lane and the 'buff room' conversion near the Carrington Arms. Generally, minor developments and extensions and modifications to existing buildings will have been constructed in materials and designs matching existing and adjacent buildings.

Particular care will have been taken to retain the character of areas such as the terrace of railway cottages on Station Road, the houses on the west side of Bullington End Road and the newer developments in Shepperton Close and Thrupp Close.

New development will have been constrained to be within the settlement boundary of 2015 with the population of around 1,100 being able to sustain the Assets of Community Value of school, church, pub and shop as well as allotments and the play areas at the Fishponds and at Thrupp Close/Bullington End Road. Leisure amenities have been protected by the designation of the Recreation Ground, South Street Paddock, Gobbey's Field and Village Green as Green Spaces for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.

Finally, the visitor would note continued expansion of the Lodge Farm Business Centre which, together with continuing farm diversification and home based businesses, have allowed the village to retain a balance between its residents of working age and employment opportunities within the parish.

The visitor would note with pleasure a parish with a village at its centre in a rural setting, protecting its heritage but sustainable in terms of employment and leisure.

## Objectives

3.2 To achieve this vision a number of key objectives have been identified as follows:

1. To ensure sympathetic development through design guidelines to reflect the different areas of character of the village and to ensure the historic buildings and structures are maintained and where necessary enhanced.
2. To enable the use of community facilities such as the shop, school, allotment, playing areas, church and the pub, the latter through enabling parking by the village pub.
3. To provide housing including low cost housing outside the Conservation Area to meet local need.
4. To protect the Recreation Ground, South Street Paddock, Gobbey's Field and Village Green through designating these as Local Green Spaces for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.

5. To encourage the expansion of the Lodge Farm Business Centre and Balney Grounds, continuing farm diversification and home-based businesses to maintain employment opportunities within the parish for all age groups and type of skills.

## Monitoring & Review

3.3 The Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored by Milton Keynes Council and Castlethorpe Parish Council on an annual basis using data collected in planning monitoring reports. The objectives will form the core of the monitoring activity but other data collected and reported at a village level relevant to the Plan may also be included. It is expected that the Neighbourhood Plan will be formally reviewed on a five-year cycle or to coincide with the development and review of the Milton Keynes Local Plan if this cycle is different.

# 4. Land Use Policies

## Policy Issues

- 4.1 The context for this Neighbourhood Plan sets out some clear historic and environmental constraints, for example the Conservation Area and Scheduled Ancient Monument covering a large part of the village in the centre, and the wildlife corridor that runs along the railway. In addition, the main reason for the small growth planned by the Core Strategy in the Parish is due to its rural location and the focus of growth in the City on its main urban area and other larger settlements like Newport Pagnell, Olney and Woburn Sands. The focus of the Neighbourhood Plan is therefore very much on managing the future of the village of Castlethorpe, and to an extent the nature of its immediate neighbour to the south, the city of Milton Keynes.
- 4.2 Given the Community Views as expressed above in 2.3, residential housing development will be permitted on the land adjacent to Paddock Close as shown on Plan H. The Parish Council will seek to obtain housing in line with the wishes of the community. The Parish Council proposes the amendment of the settlement boundary to include this area.
- 4.3 The Lodge Farm Business Centre and Balney Grounds farm diversification have a number of employees and are expected to continue to be successful given their locations its location. Therefore the NP sets out a policy that is more permissive of employment development at the sites without compromising the surrounding countryside or limited highways access.
- 4.4 The Neighbourhood Plan wants to encourage the reopening of the Carrington Arms pub and through providing well-needed car parking the Neighbourhood Plan hopes to help its business.

## Land Use Policies

- 4.5 Land use policies are used to determine planning applications made for development proposals. They can establish the principles for retaining or changing the use of land in settlements and in the countryside. They can also set out the conditions against which development proposals will be judged in terms of their design, access etc.
- 4.6 The purpose of these policies is to either encourage planning applications to be made for things the local community wants to see happen or to discourage applications for developments that they do not want to happen. Policies must be clearly written so they can be easily applied when considering planning applications.
- 4.7 This Neighbourhood Plan deliberately avoids

repeating existing national or local planning policies where there is no Castlethorpe-specific case to make. The proposed policies therefore focus on a relatively small number of key development issues in the area. For all other planning matters, the national and local policies of other planning documents – the National Planning Policy Framework, the 2013 Core Strategy and the saved policies of the Milton Keynes Local Plan 2005 – will continue to be used. In addition, there are some outcomes of the community survey which the Neighbourhood Plan cannot address as a land use planning document. Some issues are covered in Section 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan; these and others will be taken forward by the Parish Council separately from the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 4.8 Set out below are the proposed policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. Each policy has a number and title and the policy itself is written in bold italics for ease of reference. There is also a short statement explaining the intention of the policy and any other relevant background information. At the end of this document is the Policies Map – where a policy refers to a specific site or area then it is shown on the Map.

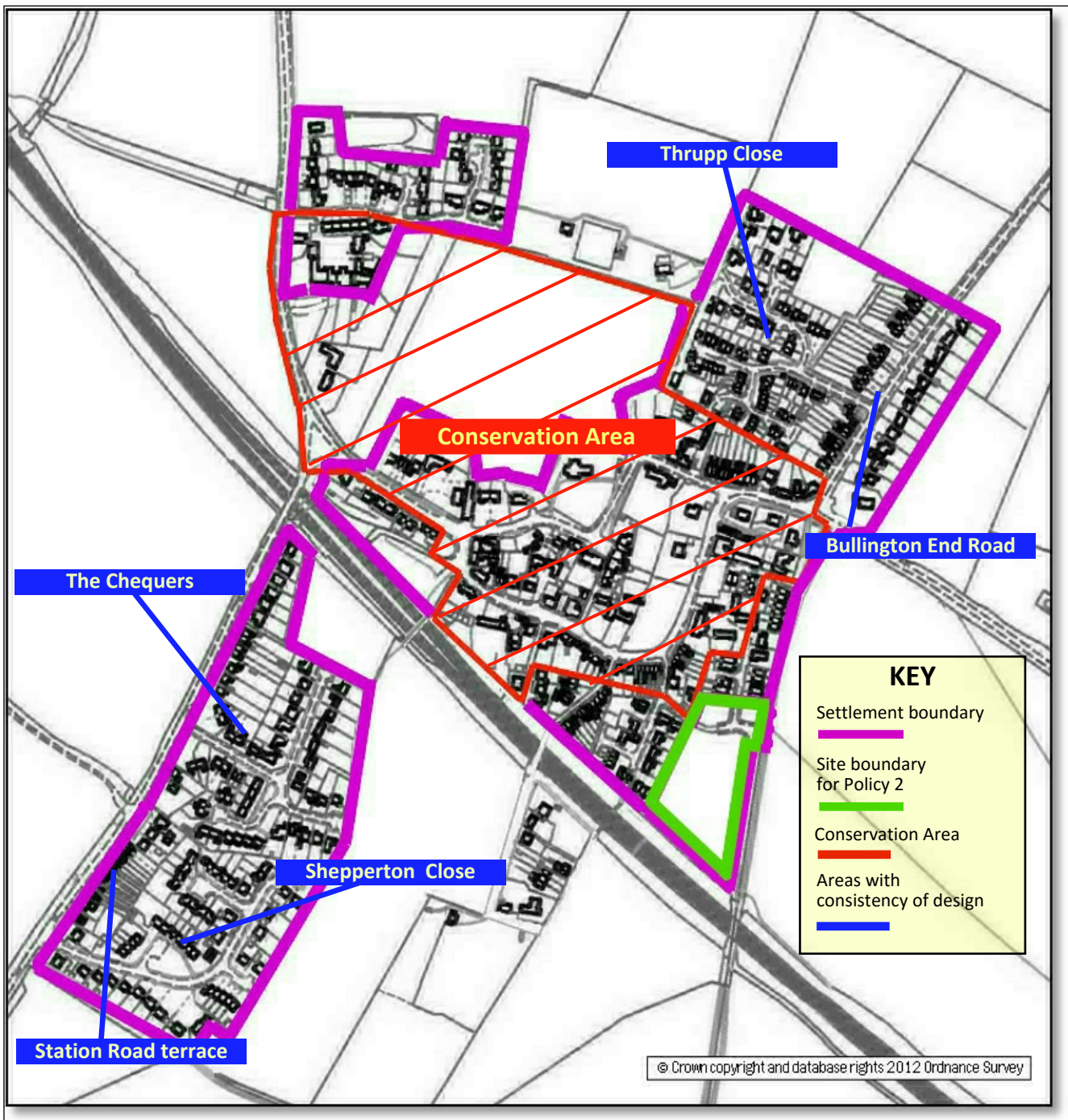
## Policy 1: Castlethorpe Development Boundary

***The Neighbourhood Plan defines the development boundary at the village of Castlethorpe, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of containing the physical growth of the village over the plan period.***

***Development proposals within the development boundary will be supported, provided they comply with the provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Development Plan.***

***Development proposals outside of the development boundary will only be supported if they comply with the provisions of the Development Plan in respect of the control of development in the countryside.***

- 4.9 This policy redefines the development boundary of Castlethorpe village shown on the Proposals Map of the Milton Keynes development plan, pursuant to Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy that sets out the strategy for the rural area of the district. It reaffirms the boundary originally drawn in 2005 and modified in 2013 and makes provision for the new land allocation of Policy 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.10 The policy is consistent with Policy CS9 in only supporting housing development within the newly-defined boundary, as Castlethorpe is identified in the settlement hierarchy of Policy CS1 as an “Other Village with a Development Boundary”. In such villages, some “small scale” housing development through sensitive infill is supported. Although



**PLAN H: Plan of the design character areas and proposed change to the development boundary**

the site to the rear of Maltings Field lies on the edge of the village, it is well-contained within the structure of the village. The eastern boundary of the village has been re-established in recent years with the housing schemes at Fox Covert Lane and Paddock Close. This site lies within the natural physical lines of that boundary and of the railway line cutting to its south.

## Policy 2: Land at Maltings Field

*The Neighbourhood Plan allocates Land at Maltings Field, on the south-east edge of Castlethorpe village, as shown on the Policies Map, for a housing scheme of approximately 30 dwellings, which will have an*

*emphasis on smaller open market and affordable homes, especially starter homes and downsizer homes.*

*Development proposals for this site will be supported, provided they accord with all of the following principles:*

- i. The scheme provides, at a minimum, an ungated, made up pedestrian access from Maltings Field along the line of the existing footpath;*
- ii. The built form, materials, boundary treatment and arrangement of car parking, provided at a minimum of two off-street spaces per dwelling, is of a similar character to the adjoining residential scheme at Paddock Close;*



- iii. The scheme layout provides for an appropriate noise and visual buffer to the railway line along its southern boundary;**
- iv. The landscape scheme creates a strong, attractive and defensible boundary to the open countryside to the east of the site; and**
- v. A planning obligation is made to provide an appropriate financial contribution to the Parish Investment Projects outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan.**

4.11 This policy allocates land at Maltings Field on the edge of Castlethorpe for a small-scale housing scheme, as provided for by the amended development boundary of Policy 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan. The land is in a single ownership and has now been made available for development within the plan period.

4.12 The site is considered to be appropriate in principle for a housing scheme that will meet the housing needs of the local community for smaller, lower cost houses suited to younger households and “downsizers” wanting to move to a smaller, open market property and to stay in the village. The deficiency of housing stock for starter and downsizer homes in the village is the basis for this policy and it would be expected that two-thirds of the homes would be two-bedroom dwellings. The site can be accessed from Maltings Field, which serves a small number of other houses in this part of the village, as well as Fox Covert Lane, and should be similarly capable of accommodating car parking without causing problems beyond the site.

4.13 A high-quality scheme is required, given the location of the site within the setting of the



**PLAN 1: The different types of housing in Castlethorpe. South Street and School Lane, top, are both in the Conservation Area. Middle row: The terrace of railway cottages in Station Road and The Chequers. Bottom row: Shepperton Close and Thrupp Close**

Conservation Area to its immediate north and west along Maltings Field. The recent housing scheme at Paddock Close is regarded as a successfully designed scheme and this should act as a clear cue for the design of this scheme. Here, however, its relationship to the open countryside to the east requires a strong landscape buffer and defensible boundary to be established that will prevent any further encroachment into that countryside. The scheme should also provide for an effective buffer to the busy railway line to its immediate south. Finally, the policy also requires that a planning obligation is made to secure an appropriate financial contribution to one or more projects identified in Section 5 (Para 5.8). These projects are all related to improving the social infrastructure of the village, on which the future residents of the scheme will depend; hence this requirement is directly related to the scheme in line with Para 173 of the NPPF.

4.14 Prior to a planning application being submitted the area should be subject to an archaeological field evaluation comprising trial trenching. This will enable any necessary mitigation (excavation or avoidance of significant buried archaeology) to be agreed and secured via a condition on the eventual planning permission.

4.15 A foul drainage strategy should be submitted with any planning application which demonstrates that infrastructure capacity is available or there will be sufficient capacity to serve the development.

### Policy 3: Design Guidance

***Development proposals will be supported, provided their scale, density, massing, height, landscape design, layout and materials, including alterations to existing buildings, reflect and enhance the architectural and historic character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape in their specified character area, as shown on the Policies Map, as follows:***

***Both character areas:***

- ***Two storeys building height;***
- ***Roof pitch ranging from 35° to 45°; and***
- ***Window openings are small in relation to the elevation of the building.***

***Character Area 1:***

- ***Building materials are limestone, which has weathered to a creamy grey colour, and red brick;***
- ***Roofing materials are thatch and dark blue***

***slate, the former being found only on buildings constructed in stone;***

- ***Roof pitch between 25° and 35°.***

***In Character Area 2, proposals should be constructed from materials similar in colour and texture to the materials and design found on adjacent buildings. Extensions and other building works to existing buildings will be required to be constructed from materials and design matching the existing building.***

4.16 This policy requires all development proposals to deliver high-quality schemes that reflect the distinct character of the Parish. It also acknowledges the Conservation Area, which covers a large part of the parish and therefore the design of any proposals for housing development in Character Area 1 that must be appropriate to a Conservation Area. Similarly, proposals in Character Area 2 that form the setting of the Conservation Area must also have this same regard. A description of the character of the area is set out in the Parish Plan adopted in 2008.

4.17 **Character Area 1** coincides with the designated Conservation Area. New buildings and other works within the Conservation Area are therefore required by the policy to be constructed from stone or red brick similar in form, colour and texture to the materials on the older buildings in the village. It is expected that extensions or other building works to existing buildings will be required to be constructed from materials matching the existing buildings.

4.18 **Character Area 2** forms the rest of the built-up area of the village outside the Conservation Area and within the settlement boundary. The policy requires new buildings to be constructed from materials similar in colour and texture to the materials found on adjacent buildings. It is expected that extensions and other building works to existing buildings will be constructed from materials matching the existing building.

4.19 The following areas are observed to have a consistency of design and materials and the policy requires that proposals for infill or redevelopment in these five locations have regard to the common building form, plot size, building line and materials in each location:

The west side of Bullington End Road (Nos 1-45);  
Terrace of railway cottages in Station Road (Nos 39-53);  
and all properties in Shepperton Close; The Chequers; and Thrupp Close.



## Policy 4: Community Facilities

*Proposals to improve the viability of an established community use of the following buildings and facilities by way of the extension or partial redevelopment of existing buildings will be supported, provided the design of the scheme and the resulting increase in use are appropriate in design terms and will not harm the amenities of adjoining residential properties:*

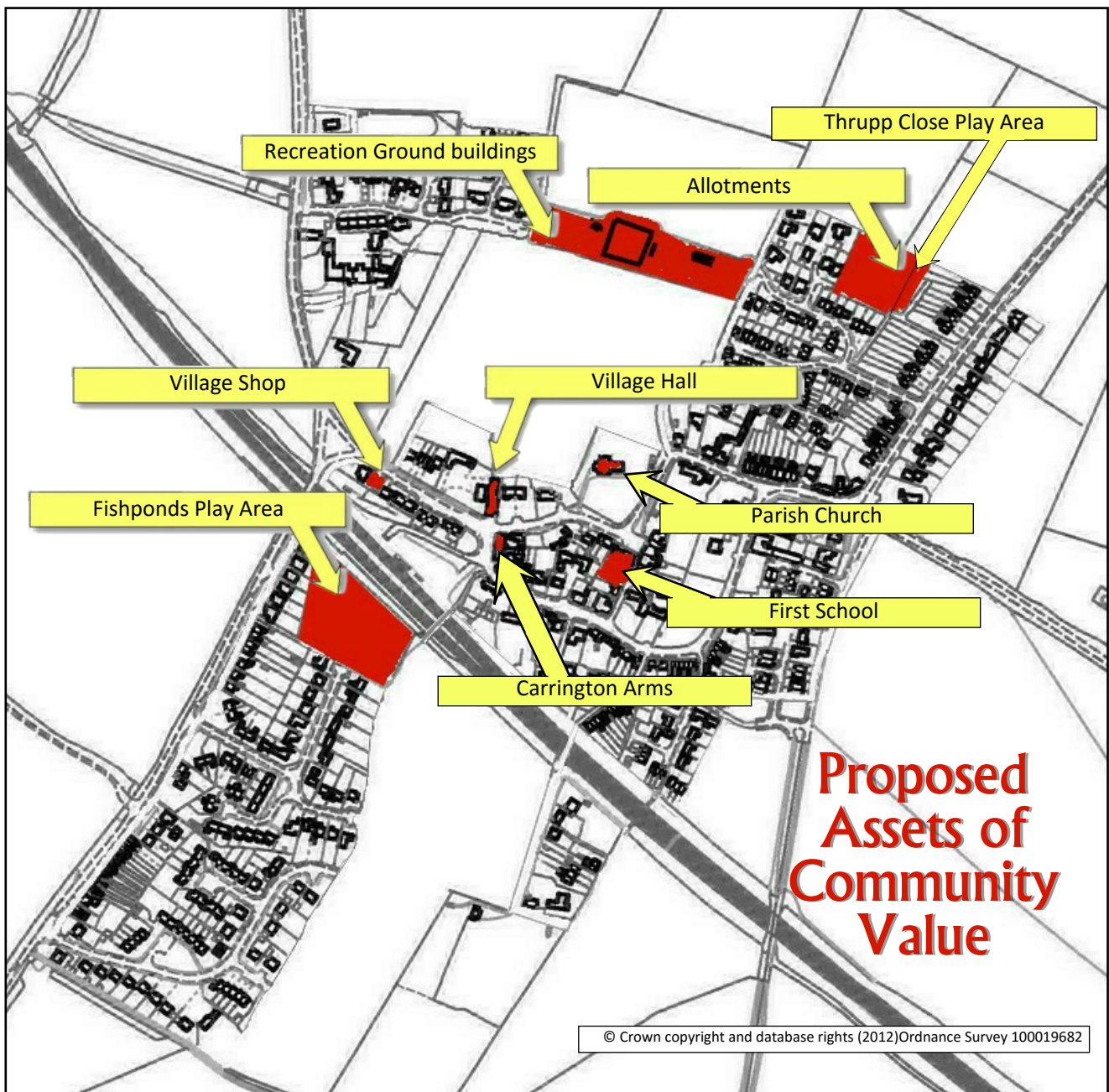
- i. Village Hall;*
- ii. Castlethorpe First School;*
- iii. Parish Church of SS Simon and Jude;*
- iv. Carrington Arms public house;*
- v. Village Shop;*
- vi. Recreation Ground buildings and the wildlife area;*

*vii. Allotments;*

*viii. Fishponds Play Area; and*

*ix. Thrupp Close Play Area.*

4.20 The Parish Council intends to apply to MKC so that the buildings and facilities listed in this policy will become Assets of Community Value. The Plan also seeks to protect community facilities from disuse or change of use in accordance with Paragraph 28 of NPPF 'Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy' by promoting "the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship".



**PLAN J: Plan of the village's proposed Assets of Community Value**

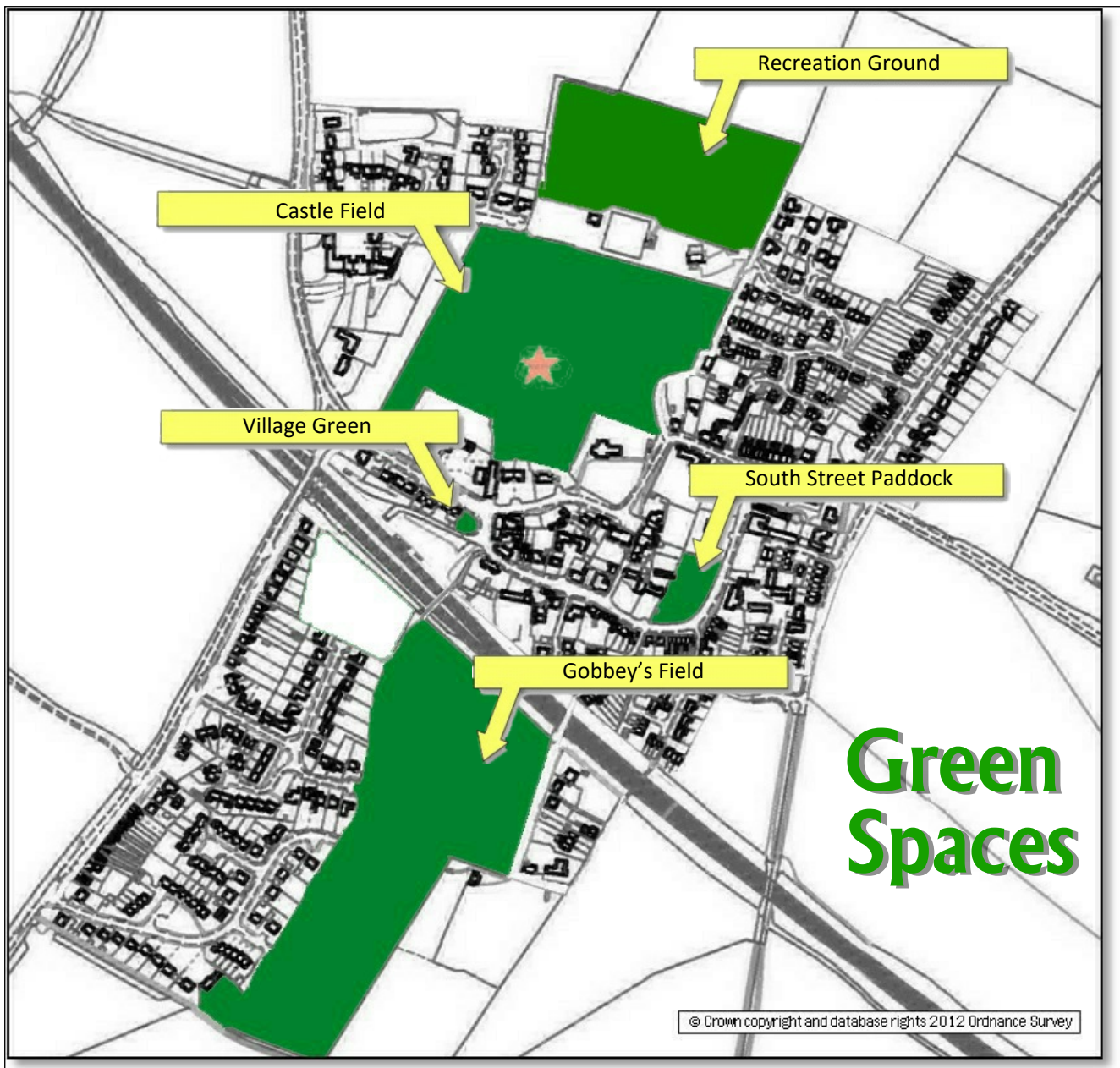




**PLAN K: Castlethorpe's Community Facilities. From the top, the Village Hall, the First School, the Parish Church of SS Simon and Jude, the Carrington Arms, the Cricket Pavilion – one of the Recreation Ground buildings – the Village Shop, the Allotments and the Fishponds and Thrupp Close Play areas**







**PLAN L: Plan of the village's green spaces and Castle Field, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument**

## Policy 5: Local Green Spaces

*The Neighbourhood Plan designates Local Green Spaces in the following locations, as shown on the Policies Map:*

- i. Castle Field;*
- ii. Recreation Ground;*
- iii. South Street Paddock;*
- iv. Gobbey's Field; and*
- v. Village Green.*

***Proposals for development in a Local Green Space will be resisted, unless they are ancillary to the use of the land for a public recreational purpose or are required for a statutory utility infrastructure purpose.***

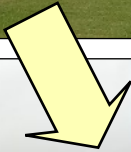
4.21 This policy proposes a number of important green spaces in the parish to be protected from

development by the designation as Local Green Spaces in accordance with the NPPF.

4.22 In each case, the green spaces are an integral part of the settlements in the Parish and are therefore regarded as special to the local community. The Neighbourhood Plan Local Green Spaces study (Annex B in the evidence base) sets out the case for each site to be designated. Once designated, the policy will resist all proposals for development unless it can be clearly demonstrated they are minor, they are ancillary to a public recreation use or they are required utilities development.



*PLAN M: Castlethorpe's Green Spaces: Gobbey's Field and the Village Green, above, a cricket match being played on the Recreation Ground, below; and bottom, the South Street Paddock and Castle Field*





## Policy 6: Car Parking at the Carrington Arms

*Proposals for a public car park on part of the Village Green, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported provided it can be demonstrated that the car park is necessary to maintain the viability of the Carrington Arms and they will not harm the enjoyment of the village green.*

- 4.23 Car parking is extremely limited outside the Carrington Arms, which is used not only by potential customers of the pub but also by users of the Village Hall opposite as well as adjacent residents.
- 4.24 In fact, the southernmost (railway side) part of the Village Green falls within the curtilage of Station Yard which is in private ownership and has a common owner with the Carrington Arms. The landowner, Milton Keynes Council, has agreed in principle to allow a small part of the Green, which is a Public Open Space, to be used for the construction of car parking.



**PLAN N: Plan of the proposed car parking spaces at the Carrington Arms**

## Policy 7: Lodge Farm Business Centre and Balney Grounds

*Development proposals to expand the Lodge Farm Business Centre and to diversify further at Balney Grounds will be supported, provided:*

- i. they are confined to land within the boundary of the site, as shown on the Policies Map;*
- ii. they include a landscape scheme that will effectively screen the site from the surrounding countryside; and*
- iii. their design conforms to other policies of the development plan.*

4.25 The Business Centre at Lodge Farm is supported as a provider not only of local employment

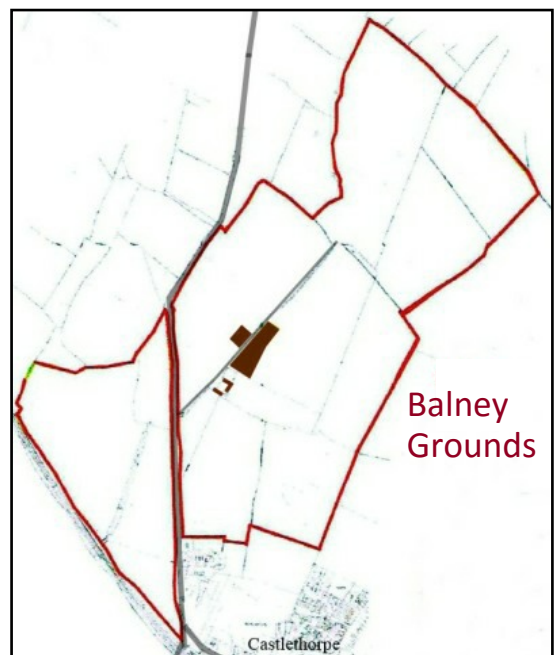
opportunities but also as a 'stepping stone' for home-based businesses into small offices as they expand.

4.26 The continuing development of the Lodge Farm Business Centre and Balney Grounds is supported and applications for further development should be regarded as permissive in accordance with Policy E6 'New Buildings for Employment Uses in the Open Countryside' (2005 Local Plan) which allows for necessary new employment buildings as part of farm diversification schemes

4.27 The principal constraints are that development should be within the area defined by the map and that construction should follow the same design format as the existing buildings.



**PLAN O: Lodge Farm Business Centre**



**PLAN P: Balney Grounds**

© Crown copyright. 100026380,2012

## Policy 8: Cosgrove Leisure Park Access

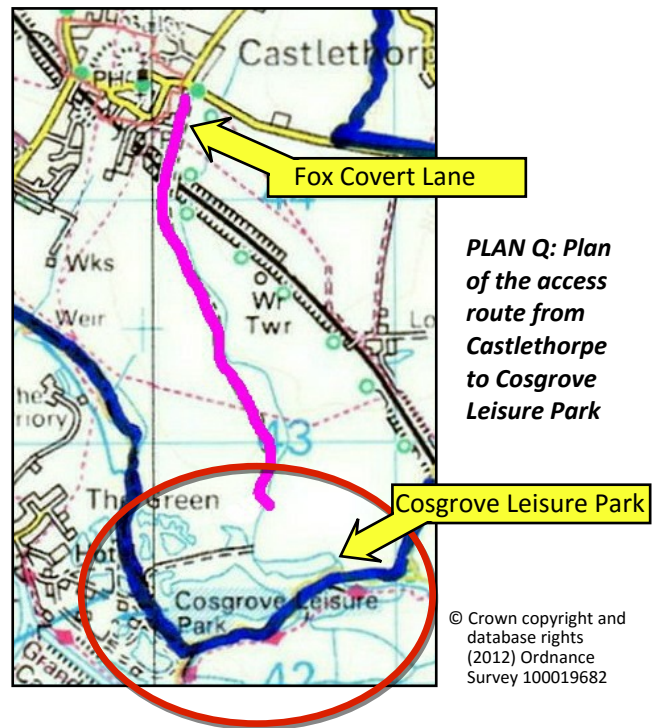
*Development proposals at Cosgrove Leisure Park, as shown on the Policies Map, will be resisted if they will result in the use of Fox Covert Lane in Castlethorpe as a new customer access. The occasional use of this means of access for the removal of mobile homes will continue to be supported.*

4.28 The Cosgrove Leisure Park, although associated with the neighbouring village of Cosgrove in Northamptonshire, lies partly within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Most notably, the site is served by an access to Castlethorpe village – Fox Covert Lane – that is occasionally used to move mobile homes, for which the main site access into Cosgrove is not well suited.

4.29 This occasional use is accepted but any use of the access for Leisure Park by its car-borne customers will not be acceptable. The Lane is not well suited for that purpose and such a proposal will harm the amenities of the residential areas of the village that adjoin the Lane.

## Policy 9: Surrounding Countryside & Landscape

*Development proposals that will harm the open character and landscape value of the countryside that surrounds Castlethorpe village will be resisted. Proposals for wind turbines will not be supported as they will be intrusive in the landscape and will*



**PLAN Q: Plan of the access route from Castlethorpe to Cosgrove Leisure Park**

*adversely affect the setting of Heritage Assets in the parish.*

4.30 The village of Castlethorpe has significant historic interest and importance in the open landscape north of Milton Keynes. The landscape setting to the village plays a crucial role in defining its character in sharp contrast to the major city settlement to the south. That landscape is therefore not well suited to urban-type infrastructure and large structures like wind turbines that would disrupt that essential character.

# 5. Implementation

5.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented through a combination of the Local Planning Authority's consideration and determination of planning applications for development in the parish, and through steering public and private investment into a series of infrastructure proposals contained in the plan.

## Development Management

5.2 Most of the policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan will be delivered by landowners and developers.

In preparing the Plan, care has been taken to ensure, as far as possible, that the policies are achievable.

5.3 Whilst the local planning authority will be responsible for development management, the Parish Council will use the Neighbourhood Plan to frame its representations on submitted planning applications. It will also work with MKC to monitor the progress of sites coming forward for development.

## Assets of Community Value

5.4 The Parish Council wishes to see the following buildings and land in Castlethorpe designated as Assets of Community Value in order to provide the Parish Council or other community organisations with an opportunity to bid to acquire the asset on behalf of the local community once placed for sale on the open market.

1. Allotments
2. Carrington Arms public house
3. Church of SS Simon and Jude
4. Fishponds Play Area
5. Recreation Ground buildings
6. Thrupp Close Play Area
7. Village Hall
8. Village School
9. Village Shop

5.5 The proposal acknowledges the Neighbourhood Plan itself cannot undertake such a task.

## Salvage of Materials and Street Furniture

5.6 When demolition of old structures occurs, traditional materials such as stone, handmade bricks and tiles, slates and timber should be conserved for reuse in repair and new infill site schemes.

5.7 Over the years, the village has acquired a number of road signs, posts, notices, seats, bins and other street furniture, each often provided by a different agency and sited without regard to each other. The scheme will propose the rationalisation of these, in some cases removing signs and in others re-siting them.

- Where these occur on private land, Milton Keynes Council will negotiate with the owner to bring about improvements.
- All new or replacement streetlights within the Conservation Area will be of the 'heritage' style and other styles will be replaced with heritage over time.
- Bollards in the Conservation Area will be of the black and gold traditional style, as implemented in the 2014 Village Centre highways scheme.
- Waste bins in the Conservation Area will also be of the black and gold traditional style.

## Infrastructure Projects

5.8 The Parish Council proposes some or all of the following projects for investment of future Section 106 financial contributions or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding allocated by the local planning authority and to the Parish Council. Note: MKC is not currently intending to prepare a Community Infrastructure Levy:

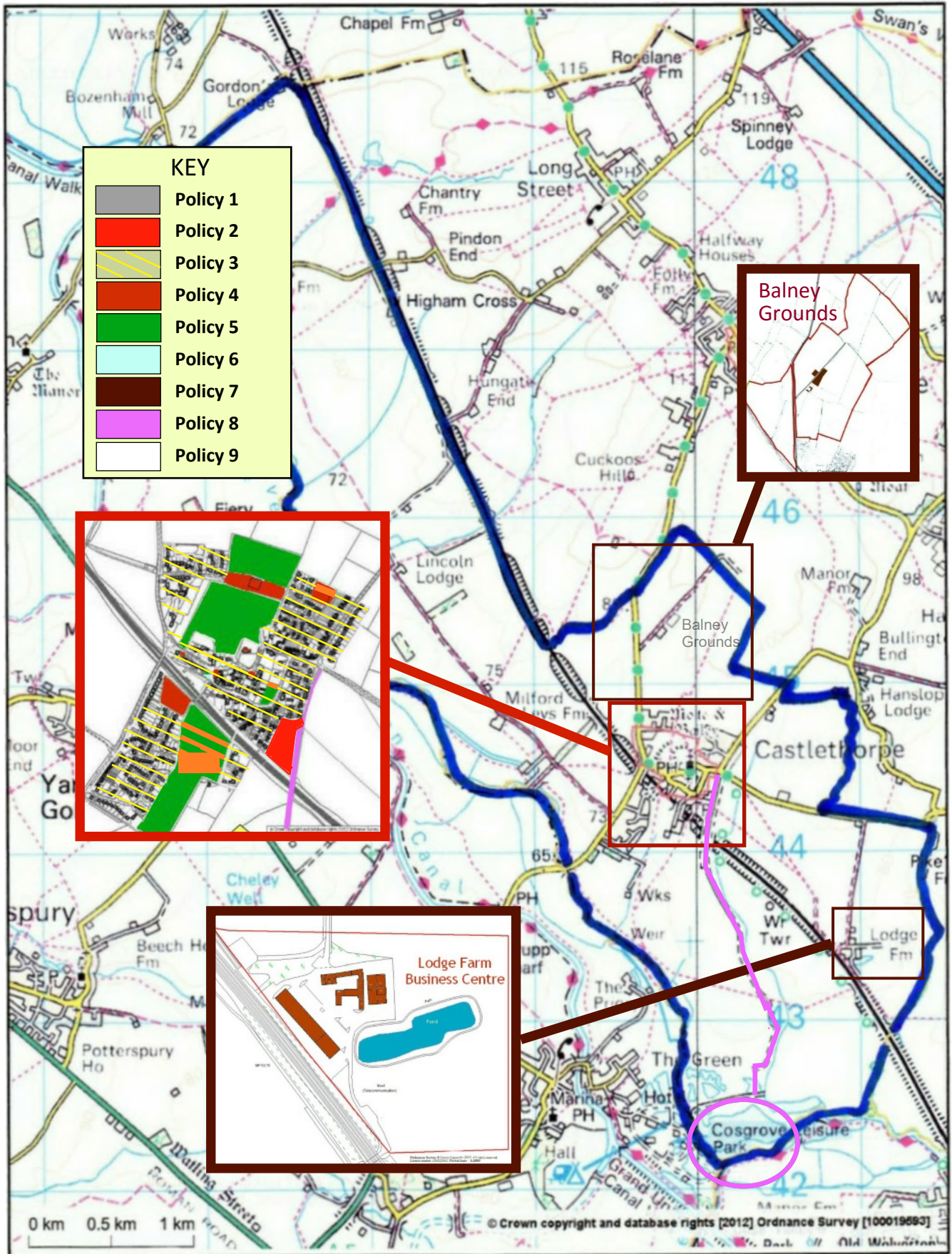
1. Increase of capacity at Castlethorpe First School;
  2. A play area or adult outdoor exercise area in the old Wildlife Area;
  3. New play equipment for Thrupp Close play area;
  4. Improvements to the Village Hall;
- Should improvements to village infrastructure also be allowable, we would add:*
5. Creation of a footway from Paddock Close to South Street;
  6. Surface the Sustrans cycle path between the Lodge Farm Business Centre railway bridge and the village;
  7. Construct further speed reduction measures.
- This is not an exhaustive list and will be reviewed after the public consultation. Other projects may be included later.

5.9 This series of local infrastructure projects will be prioritised for investment should development in the Parish result in the availability of Section 106 financial contributions or should Milton Keynes Council prepare a CIL in the future.

5.10 In addition, other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan require some planning obligations to be entered into as part of planning consents to finance and deliver specific infrastructure projects relating to the development scheme in order to make the scheme satisfactory in line with Paragraphs 173 and 204 of the NPPF.



# Policies Map



# Annex A – Evidence Base

The list below contains all those documents collected and reviewed in the process of preparing this report. All are available to view via the Castlethorpe Parish Council website's Neighbourhood Plan pages at [www.castlethorpevillage.org.uk/neighbourhoodplan](http://www.castlethorpevillage.org.uk/neighbourhoodplan)

<b>Castlethorpe Parish Plan (2008)</b>
<b>A Plan for Castlethorpe (1982)</b>
<b>Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan: Local Green Spaces Study (2015) – Annex B of this Plan</b>
<b>Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan: Assets of Community Value (2015) – Annex C of this Plan</b>
<b>MKC Local Plan (2005)</b>
<b>MKC Core Strategy (2008)</b>
<b>MKC Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2013)</b>
<b>Environment Agency Flood risk maps (2015)</b>
<b>MK HER Castlethorpe Castle (MMK653)</b>

# Annex B - Green Spaces Study

## 1. Introduction

The village of Castlethorpe falls within the rural area of the Borough of Milton Keynes, close to the boundary with Northamptonshire. It lies on the northern edge of the Tove River Valley, which is designated as being landscape of Special Character.

The surrounding countryside is of an undulating nature, populated by relatively small and ancient villages with little urbanisation and a large population of designated Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings.

Within and close to the curtilage of the village there are a number of parcels of land whose use justifies their classification as 'Green Space' within the Neighbourhood Plan.

The purpose of this study is to provide the rationale for their inclusion in this category.

## 2. The Parcels of Land

These are: Gobbey's Field, Recreation Ground, South Street Paddock and the Village Green. In addition Castle Field, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and thus already has protection against development, is well used by village residents and visitors alike

## 3. Rationale for designations as Green Space

**Gobbey's Field** has been special to the village of Castlethorpe for a very long time. In the 1972 Castlethorpe Village Plan it was given particular status due to its amenity and landscape value, being described as a 'tongue of green fields leading into the centre of the village'.

With the substantial growth of the village in population from 530 in 1972 to around 1,100 currently, Gobbey's has continued to hold a special place in the hearts of villagers, and its use by them has increased proportionally with the growth in population over the years.

It is not a large tract of land, 4.8 hectares in total, outside of the settlement boundary, divided in the centre by a row of low-standing ancient trees. It is enclosed by the settlement on three sides.

The terrain slopes gradually from north to south. A public right of way, a footpath, runs diagonally through the whole field from north to south. At the northern end the footpath connects directly to footbridge over the railway into South Street in the very centre of the village.

At the southern end, the footpath connects to very popular rights of way southwards to the River Tove

and northwards to the eastern side of the settlement. There are informal access points to Gobbey's from The Chequers and Shepperton Close developments on the western perimeter and Prospect Place on the eastern perimeter.

The northern part of Gobbey's includes part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) of the Motte and Bailey Castle and abuts the Fishponds children's play area.

Its central location makes Gobbey's very easy to access for the whole village and it is used for a wide variety of informal pleasure activities such as jogging, football, dog walking, children's games, golf practice, kite and model aircraft flying.

It is without doubt the most utilised Green Space in the village. Its popularity was demonstrated in the early 1990s and again in the early 2000s when proposals to develop the site for housing both met with stiff resistance from the village, resulting in the proposals being rejected in both cases.

The views from the SAM at northern end of Gobbey's and lower down the field to the south are particularly attractive, providing a vista of the Tove river valley and in the distance the ancient settlement of Cosgrove.

An ancient copse provides its perimeter for about 200 metres on the south eastern side. This is replete with wildlife, particularly birds and is the site of a large rookery.

In summary, Gobbey's is a high-quality public space, providing opportunities for social interaction and meetings which would otherwise not take place. It is tranquil, safe, and accessible and promotes healthy exercise activities within the community.

**The Recreation Ground** has become an important leisure and sporting facility since its inception in 1998. It has high-quality playing surfaces and changing facilities for football, cricket and tennis and is probably one of the superior facilities of its type in Milton Keynes villages of a similar size.

It is a high-quality public space which supports two cricket teams (a Saturday and a Sunday team) and two "veterans" (over 35) football teams. About 30 residents regularly use the tennis facilities, which are also used by casual users from the village and local area.

The facilities are managed by the Parish Council and there are maintenance contracts in place to ensure the facilities are continually in a good condition.

There is a clear pedestrian route through the facilities,



which also include parking for vehicles. Easy access is available for pedestrians from Lodge Farm Court, North Street and Thrupp Close. Paved vehicular access is available from Thrupp Close.

The football and cricket matches attract a large number of enthusiastic supporters from the village and local area, so it is a focus for social interaction and meetings which would otherwise not take place. It is safe, accessible and promotes healthy sporting and exercise activities within the community and is an important asset for the well-being of the village.

The Recreation Ground has become an asset of great local significance, encouraging the local population to be active, exercising and playing sport within their own community.

**South Street Paddock** is an ancient grazing area which for many years has been used for grazing ponies, geese and other livestock. It sits right in the heart of the village, within the Conservation Area, close to the ancient listed farmhouses of Maltings Farm and Manor Farm.

Recent archaeological studies by the Castlethorpe Historical Society found the remains of a late medieval fish pond and of a well-used cart track in the paddock, pointing to its ancient roots.

Its location on South Street means that it adjoins the circular highway route made up of North Street and South Street at the core of the village and consequently there are a great many passers-by. The grazing animals there are a constant source of interest to passers-by, particularly children. It is a

tranquil, green and pleasant and provides a great many opportunities for social interaction and meetings which would otherwise not take place.

It gives a special character to the core of the village, a historic reminder of Castlethorpe's ancient farming roots when several active farms operated within the village. It is now surrounded by housing, so it provides an excellent example of the advantages of mixed use in forming the character of the village.

**The Village Green** is a small open grassed area off South Street close to the site of Carrington Arms public house (now to be re-opened following grant of planning permission for a pub/ restaurant). It adjoins the circular highway route made up of North Street and South Street at the core of the village.

It is close to an ancient Grade II Listed thatched cottage dating back to the mid-18th Century and the Village Hall and is on the route for many villagers seeking the village shop in North Street. It also adjoins the path from the pedestrian footbridge over the railway which connects the northern and southern sections of the village.

Consequently it is in an area of almost constant activity and a great many passers-by can take advantage of its park benches to pause for a while. It provides many opportunities for social interaction and meetings which would otherwise not take place.

It is small but special to the local community as the only open green tranquil space in this section of the village, within an area of buildings.

# Annex C - Assets of Community Value

## 1. Introduction

Within the Village there are a number of buildings and parcels of land whose existence and use justifies their classification as 'Assets of Community Value'. The purpose of this Annex is to provide the rationale for inclusion in the category.

## 2. The Assets

These are: the Allotments, the Carrington Arms Public House, the Fishponds Play Area, the First School, the Parish Church, the Recreation Ground Buildings, the Thrupp Play Area, the Village Hall and the Village Shop.

## 3. Rationale for Designation as Assets of Community Value

**The allotments** are sited on a plot of land behind housing on Bullington End Road. They are owned by shareholders of the Allotments Association and there are currently sixteen '10 pole' plots. In the late 1920s a much larger plot of land which encompassed the current site, and much of the land on which the northern section of Thrupp Close was built was purchased by the Association, for use as allotments.

With the current trends in encouraging gardening as a healthy outdoor activity and producing one's own vegetables and fruit for direct consumption, the allotments play an important role in the village, providing an opportunity for those who do not have large gardens to grow their own produce.

Few houses in the village have gardens large enough for this activity, so the allotments provide the only facility in the village to meet the need.

**The Carrington Arms public house** is situated on South Street, at the junction with North Street in the very heart of the village. It is a Grade 2 Listed stone building with an impressive Georgian façade.

It has been closed for business for some years but has been recently granted planning permission for conversion into a pub/restaurant. It now has the same owner as the site for new housing in the former railway station yard and its redevelopment will take place at the same time as that project. It has been much missed by villagers who eagerly look forward again to be able to take refreshments without the

need to travel, and also to reinstate it as an important social hub for the village.

There is a long history of use of the site as a public house; in 1847 it was known as the Pea Hen Inn. A public house existed on or very near the current site since 1753, with various names including the Weavers Arms, Crooked Billet and Kings Arms.

The current lack of a public house in the village means that those seeking refreshment and a convivial environment for such must drive to other public houses in the surrounding area. There is a public house, the Navigation, on the canal at Thrupp Wharf which is within walking distance of the south side of the village but it means using a very narrow road which has quite a lot of traffic and can be dangerous, particularly after dark.

**The Fishponds Play Area** sits on land which was transferred into the ownership of the Parish Council for public use in 1921 by Lord Carrington.

Part of the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), as it forms a section of the Motte and Baillie castle which was intersected by the railway, the major part of the SAM now being north of the railway line. This area is surrounded by the banks of the fishponds that once served the motte and bailey castle in Castle Field and has similar undulating terrain.

About 35 years ago the first play area in Castlethorpe, was established there. Four pieces of playground equipment – a set of swings, a roundabout, a climbing frame and a slide – were fitted in the flat part of the site abutting The Chequers. Benches and waste bins were also fitted.

In 2009 an inspection of the play area highlighted that the design was outdated, of poor play value/stimulation and because the equipment was suitable only for use by younger children, did not offer anything for the older children or adults.

The Parish Council then undertook a project to re-equip and refurbish the area and the newly-equipped play area was opened to the public on 11 June 2011. The cost of this project was in excess of £50,000 and the Parish Council were grateful for the aid provided by grants from WREN and funding from the 'Playbuilder' scheme run by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

The Fishponds is very popular with children and adults of the village. It is easily accessed from the south of the village via entrances from Station Road, The Chequers and the footpath running through the edge of Gobbey's Field which connects The Fishponds with the bridge over the railway to South Street. The latter access also provides an easy route for those live in the centre of the village, north of the railway line.

The play area encourages outdoor physical exercise, particularly important for children now, with the many in-house distractions of the Internet and electronic devices. It also serves a meeting place and brings together children and adults who may not meet under other circumstances, promoting social interaction.

**The First School** uses a building which has a long history, starting life as the 'Board School' in October 1891. It replaced a smaller 'National School' which was built by Lord Carrington in 1867, as the population of pupils had grown, largely due to the growth in the railway works at Wolverton.

It is an attractive high quality red brick building with a bell and clock tower, situated in a central position on the main through route of the village, North Street.

Originally it was intended for a school population of about 150 children and also provided a large external playground, still in use now. The current school has a capacity of 45 children with 43 currently on the register. It is projected to exceed capacity at 48 in the next academic year. The school achieved an 'Outstanding' rating in its last OFSTED Inspection.

The village has always placed great value on maintaining the presence of the school in the village. A good quality first school provides an ideal environment for village children's first foray into education, in a caring and comfortable environment.

Over the last 35 years there have been a number of attempts to reorganise local schooling which would have resulted in closure of the village school. It is a measure of the village's values that these have always been successfully challenged and the school continues with its important position in the community.

**The Parish Church** of Saint Simon and Saint Jude is located in the heart of the village on North Street, opposite the First School.

It has a Grade 1 Listing and is a building of considerable architectural standing. It has Saxon and Norman heritage dating from the 11th and 12th centuries. As seen now, its form is largely that of how it was rebuilt about AD 1350, based on the Norman 11th/12th century replacement for an earlier Anglo-Saxon church.

It sits in the Conservation Area and is the most significant historical building in the village and parish. It lends a strong character to the ancient core of the village and a reminder of the village's long heritage; Castlethorpe was in turn a Roman, Danish, Anglo Saxon and Norman settlement. An 1881 map of the village shows the church as St Mary's, so the current name is relatively new.

In current times the church has thriving congregation who work actively with the congregation of St James Church in Hanslope, which shares the same priest.

**The Recreation Ground Buildings** were constructed from the proceeds of a planning gain payment when the Lodge Farm Court housing development was constructed in 1998.

The buildings provide modern high-quality changing and meeting facilities for football, cricket and tennis teams/users and are a key part of the functionality of the Recreation Ground, also providing hard surface car parking. Without such buildings, utilisation of the Recreation Ground would certainly be at a lower level.

There is now a public expectation of provision of good quality sporting and recreation facilities, driven by the general quality improvements in such public and privately financed facilities in the Milton Keynes area.

The availability of the buildings and their convenience greatly aids the Recreation Ground to meet its objectives of encouraging healthy outdoor exercise for children and adults of all ages, also providing social interactions among players and spectators which would otherwise not take place.

**The Thrupp Play Area** was created by the Parish Council on land arising from a planning gain of the Thrupp Close housing development in 1996.

It is situated between Thrupp Close and Bullington End Road and has pedestrian easy access from both, providing a convivial outdoor space for exercise and social meetings of children and adults.

It has children's swings and slides and benches for seating and picnics. This facility meets the need for



these activities in the north side of the village. In common with the Fishponds play area, this play area encourages outdoor physical exercise, particularly important for children now, with the many in-house distractions of the Internet and electronic devices. It also serves a meeting place and brings together children and adults who may not meet under other circumstances, promoting social interaction.

**The Village Hall** uses a building which was originally part of the Carrington Estate, and was known as the Carrington Hall. Lord Carrington made a greatly appreciated gift of it to the Parish Council in 1920 and it became the Village Hall for public use.

It is an attractive red brick building in a similar style to the First School, again situated in a central position on the main through route of the village, North Street.

In recent years it has been extensively extended and modernised, recent additions being a modernised kitchen and a play area at the rear for use of the pre-school group.

It is very popular with the village, to the extent that on occasions it has not been possible to use it for some Parish Council meetings due to other commitments! It is however normally used for the regular public monthly Parish Council meetings.

Other regular users are the daily pre-school, a full morning every day during term time, Carpet Bowls Club, Fitness Club, Zumba exercise sessions, Craft

Club, the WI, the Historical Society and bingo. Casual users are private functions such as birthday parties, quiz nights and irregular meetings.

The hall plays an important part in the well-being of the village, providing a central focus and a meeting place for social interaction which would not take place without the facility it provides

**The Village Shop** and Post Office was built in 2007, funded by a number of organisations and local residents. It is leased at below market rates to a shopkeeper by a local Community Interest Company. It has become an important service for village residents and passing local motorists.

It is situated on North Street in the centre of the village, close to the junction with Hanslope Road which means it is easily accessible both to residents and passing traffic from two directions through the village.

It is open seven days a week and sells foodstuffs, licensed alcohol, newspapers and magazines and household commodities, so coupled with the Post Office counter it provides for a local convenience shopping service which otherwise would have to be met by travelling either to Hanslope or Wolverton.

Since its establishment it has quickly established itself as an important local service, particularly for those residents who are not in a position to be able to travel easily to other local facilities.