

RAVENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL



# Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan

## Basic Conditions Statement

Regulation 15 Submission Version, July 2018





RAVENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL



# Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Background	3
3.	Conformity with National Planning Policy	4
4.	Contribution towards Sustainable Development	8
5.	Conformity with the Development Plan	10
6.	Compatibility with EU Obligations and Legislation	14
7.	CONCLUSION	16

# Annex

Annex A: Appropriate Assessment Screening report from

Milton Keynes Council

Annex B: Map of Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area



RAVENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL



# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by Ravenstone Parish Council [The Parish Council] in support of the formal submission of the Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan [the Neighbourhood Plan] to the Local Planning Authority, Milton Keynes Council [MKC]. The submission has been made under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, 2012 [the Regulations].
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Parish Council who are the designated qualifying body for the Neighbourhood Area covering the whole of the Parish of Ravenstone. The Neighbourhood Area was approved by MKC on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017.
- 1.3 The policies described in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area only. No other Neighbourhood Plan covers this area. The plan period of the Neighbourhood Plan is from 2018 to 2031 and it does not contain policies relating to excluded development in accordance with the Regulations.
- 1.4 The Statement addresses each of the four 'basic conditions' required of the Regulations and explains how the Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act.
- 1.5 The Regulations state that a Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the basic conditions if:
  - a) Has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
  - b) Contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;



- d) Is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
- e) Is compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Right (ECHR) obligations.

1.6 The Neighbourhood Plan area can be seen below.

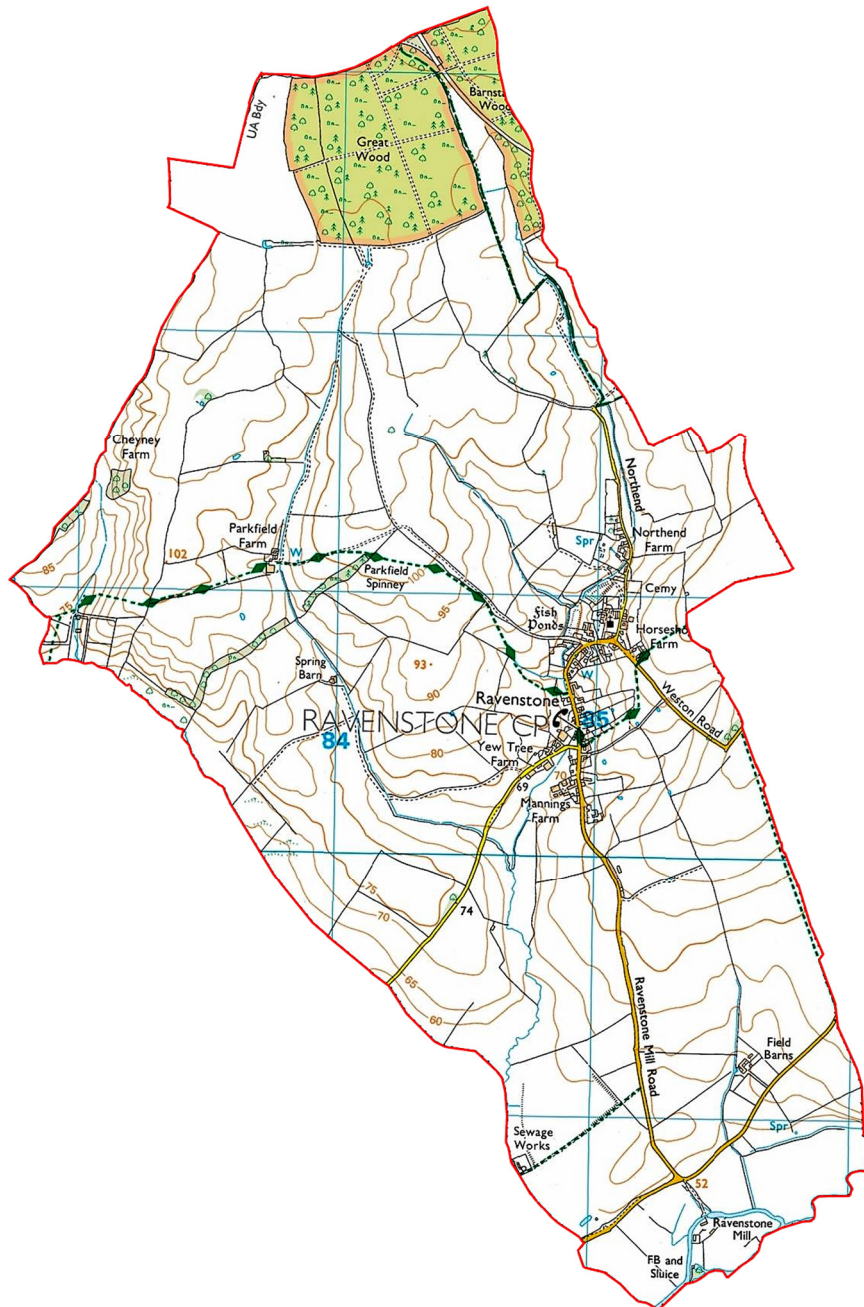


Figure 1: The designated Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan area.



RAVENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL



## 2. Background

- 2.1 The decision to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan was made by the Parish Council on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared having regard to the strategic policies of the Milton Keynes Core Strategy [the Core Strategy] adopted in 2013. It also looks ahead to the provisions of the forthcoming 'Plan:MK' - the new Local Plan - which will replace the Core Strategy and Local Plan and cover the period to 2031.
- 2.2 A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was formed by the Parish Council, comprising Parish Councillors and members of the local community and it was delegated authority to make day-to-day decisions on the Neighbourhood Plan. However, as the qualifying body, the Parish Council approved the Regulation 15 Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan of July 2018.
- 2.3 The Parish Council has worked closely with officers of Milton Keynes Council during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure the relationship between the Neighbourhood Plan and the saved policies of the Core Strategy and Local Plan, together with the reasoning and evidence of the emerging Plan:MK ("the new Local Plan") have been properly understood.
- 2.4 The Steering Group has also benefited from the professional planning and design advice of Chris Akrill BA (Hons) Dtp MRTPI of Town Planning Services Limited.



RAVENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL



### 3. Conformity with National Planning Policy

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with reference to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of April 2012. It is also mindful of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) published by the Government in April 2014 in respect of formulating neighbourhood plans.
- 3.2 The Neighbourhood Plan conforms with the NPPF paragraph 16 in that the Neighbourhood Plan includes positively worded policies that seek to shape new development and makes allocations for new housing over and above that identified by the Milton Keynes Core Strategy.
- 3.3 The Neighbourhood Plan has also been prepared with due regard to NPPF paragraphs 183 to 185 and conforms with the requirement to be in accordance with the requirements of the Development Plan.
- 3.4 Set out in Table 1, is a summary of how each policy conforms to the NPPF. The paragraphs referred to in the table are those considered the most relevant to each policy but are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible relevant paragraphs.

**Table 1: Conformity of Neighbourhood Plan policies and the NPPF**

Policy No.	Policy Title	NPPF Paragraph	NP Policy Comparison to NPPF
CE1	COUNTRYSIDE	17, 109, 110, 111, 126	Contributes to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Encourages the effective use of land by controlling sporadic development. Protecting valued landscapes. Minimising effects of development on the natural and historic environment.
CE2	ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE	28, 73, 75	Promoting a strong rural economy, support sustainable rural tourism. Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation. Protect and enhance public rights of way.
CE3	ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY	109	Supports proposals that enhance biodiversity and the environment of Ravenstone and requires new development to demonstrate how they would create new habitats, landscape features and enhanced biodiversity.
CD1	RAVENSTONE CHARACTER	126, 128, 129, 131	Requires development proposals to demonstrate how they would respect and enhance the heritage assets of the village, including the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings. New development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
CD2	HERITAGE ASSETS	126, 132, 133, 134	Requires proposals to consider, conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets and their settings.
CD3	HIGH QUALITY DESIGN	55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61	The policy requires high quality design, that respects the character and appearance of the village, the setting of heritage assets and the Conservation Area. The policy does



**Table 1: Conformity of Neighbourhood Plan policies and the NPPF**

Policy No.	Policy Title	NPPF Paragraph	NP Policy Comparison to NPPF
			not impose architectural styles or particular tastes. It has focused on development respecting the character of its surroundings.
FR1	FLOOD RISK	99, 100, 103, 109	The policy promotes sustainable development and recognises the role that the planning system must respond to climate change. Promotes improvements to biodiversity and habitat through the creation of flood storage areas.
HT1	HIGHWAYS AND VILLAGE GATEWAYS	29, 35, 58	Seeks to establish safe and secure layouts, avoiding street clutter, responding to local character and history.
HT2	PARKING	39, 58	Conforms with local parking standards and responds to local character and history.
CF1	COMMUNITY FACILITIES	28, 70, 74	Promotes the retention and development of local services and community facilities within the village.
H1	SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY	7, 14, 109, 111	Promotes sustainable development meeting local needs whilst protecting the built, natural and historic environment. Encourages the use of brownfield land
H2	NEW HOUSING ALLOCATION (PHA1)	50, 55, 58, 70, 103, 110, 126	The policy promotes a positive approach to delivery new homes in the village. It requires development to be sustainable, enhance biodiversity and support community assets in the village.
H3	WINDFALL DEVELOPMENT	50, 55, 58, 70, 103, 110, 126	The policy promotes a positive approach to delivery new homes in the village. It requires development to be sustainable, enhance biodiversity and support community assets in the village.

Table 1: Conformity of Neighbourhood Plan policies and the NPPF

Policy No.	Policy Title	NPPF Paragraph	NP Policy Comparison to NPPF
BE1	BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT	21, 28, 69	The policy supports existing and new businesses within the Parish and provides a range of criteria to guide development and protect the environment of the parish and the amenity of neighbours.



RAVENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL



## 4. Contribution towards Sustainable Development

- 4.1 The NPPF states in paragraph 14 that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF and 'should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.'
- 4.2 The strategic objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan comprise a balance of social, economic and environmental roles.
- 4.3 The social role includes the support for community facilities within the village, ensuring that policies are inclusive and meet the needs of the young and the elderly and those in between and support for the continued provision of the bus service. The Neighbourhood Plan supports the growth of Ravenstone to maintain a thriving community, recognising that needs may change over time. Encouragement is also given to improving access to the countryside, recognising the social benefits of recreation.
- 4.4 The economic role has been met by recognising the importance that agriculture plays to this rural community and supporting home working and connectivity improvements. It is recognised that the housing allocation has been made on an existing employment site, but this takes account of the owner's future plans for retirement. On balance, the social, economic and environmental benefits of providing more housing on previously developed land are considered to outweigh the limited loss of employment, which would cease in any event when the owners retire.
- 4.5 The environmental role has been delivered by the protection of the natural environment and historic environment, the requirement for good design, energy efficiency, sustainable drainage, minimising adverse impacts and securing net gains to biodiversity.

- 4.6 Milton Keynes Council considered that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was not required because the Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant impact upon the environment.
- 4.7 A copy of the Screening Response from Milton Keynes Council is appended to this document at Annex 1.



RAVENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL



## 5. Conformity with the Development Plan

- 5.1 The development plan for Ravenstone providing strategic planning policies is the Milton Keynes Core Strategy 2013. Plan:MK will replace both documents and will include new strategic policies once it is adopted.
- 5.2 Plan:MK has been submitted for examination, with the hearing sessions taking place in Summer 2018. As the plan has not been adopted, there is no requirement to assess the Neighbourhood Plan against the strategic policies it contains.
- 5.3 Table 2 below sets out how each policy is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Milton Keynes Core Strategy.



Table 2: Conformity of Neighbourhood Plan policies and the Core Strategy

Core Strategy Policy	Neighbourhood Plan Policy	NP Policy Comparison to Core Strategy
CS1 MILTON KEYNES SETTLEMENT STRATEGY	H1 SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY H2 NEW HOUSING ALLOCATION H3 WINDFALL INFILL DEVELOPMENT	Ravenstone is identified as an 'other village with development boundaries'. No housing is allocated by the Core Strategy, so the Neighbourhood Plan has exceeded the housing requirements of the Core Strategy by positively planning for new housing.
CS9 STRATEGY FOR THE RURAL AREA	H3 WINDFALL INFILL DEVELOPMENT	Appropriate infill development and conversions will be allowed in villages with development boundaries. Our windfall development policy complies with this.
CS10 HOUSING	HT2 PARKING	Parking should meet or exceed adopted parking standards.
CS11 A WELL-CONNECTED MILTON KEYNES	CE2 ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE	The policy seeks to enhance access to the countryside where possible, improving non-car-based connections with other villages.

Table 2: Conformity of Neighbourhood Plan policies and the Core Strategy		
Core Strategy Policy	Neighbourhood Plan Policy	NP Policy Comparison to Core Strategy
CS12 DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL NEIGHBOURHOODS	CE2 ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE CD3 HIGH QUALITY DESIGN FR1 FLOOD RISK BE1 BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT	The Neighbourhood Plan policies seek to improve access, promote high quality design, minimise flood risk and encourage business and home working.
CS13 ENSURING HIGH QUALITY, WELL DESIGNED PLACES	CD1 RAVENSTONE CHARACTER CD3 HIGH QUALITY DESIGN FR1 FLOOD RISK CE3 ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY	The policies promote high quality design, sustainable drainage, protection of character and heritage assets and a net gain in biodiversity.
CS17 IMPROVING ACCESS TO LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES	CF1 COMMUNITY FACILITIES	The policy protects community facilities and seeks to encourage their use and improvement.
CS18 HEALTHIER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES	CD3 HIGH QUALITY DESIGN FR1 FLOOD RISK	The policies seek to address a problem within the village with surface water flooding and highlights ways in which the risk to the community can be reduced as far can be achieved through the policies of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Table 2: Conformity of Neighbourhood Plan policies and the Core Strategy

Core Strategy Policy	Neighbourhood Plan Policy	NP Policy Comparison to Core Strategy
CS19 THE HISTORIC AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	CE1 ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY CD1 RAVENSTONE CHARACTER CD2 HERITAGE ASSETS H1 SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY H3 WINDFALL DEVELOPMENT	The protection of the special character of Ravenstone is a key objective of the Neighbourhood Plan. The policies have been worded to reflect this and ensure that the limited new development proposed will be accommodated sympathetically within the natural and historic environment.



RAVENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL



## 6. Compatibility with EU Obligations and Legislation

- 6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act.
- 6.2 A screening opinion was issued by Milton Keynes Council in July 2018 which advised that The Neighbourhood Plan will be in general conformity with Core Strategy which itself was screened for Appropriate Assessment. The screening process for the Milton Keynes Core Strategy demonstrated that Milton Keynes lies in an area void of any Natura 2000 sites. The nearest European site is the Chiltern Beechwoods to the south of the Borough although it was determined that the site would not be affected by Milton Keynes planning policy due to the distance of the site from Milton Keynes and there being no obvious impact pathways.
- 6.3 The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits have been granted Special Protection Area status. As with the Ouse Washes SPA/SAC and the Portholme SAC, due to the connection with the River Ouse, and development in Milton Keynes could have an impact on the SPA. However, it is assessed that any development in Milton Keynes would be unlikely to have a significant effect on the new SPA.
- 6.4 Therefore, given that the scope of development in the Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan would not extend beyond that of the Milton Keynes Core Strategy, it is concluded that the Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA is also unlikely to be significantly affected by the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.5 Given the role of Neighbourhood Plans and the scale of development being proposed in the Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that Appropriate Assessment of the plan is not required.

- 6.6 A copy of the full Appropriate Assessment Screening report from Milton Keynes Council can be seen at Annex A.





RAVENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL



## 7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Basic Conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the TCPA 1990 are considered to be met by the Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan and all the policies contained therein.
- 7.2 It is therefore respectfully suggested to the Examiner that the Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan complies with Paragraph 8(1)(a) of Schedule 4B of the Act.



RAVENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Annex A:

Appropriate Assessment  
Screening report from  
Milton Keynes Council

# **Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement**

### **Appropriate Assessment Screening**

#### **1. Introduction**

##### **1.1 What is the screening statement?**

1.2 This report has been produced following consultation on a screening opinion prepared in order to determine the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

1.3 This document also addresses the need for Appropriate Assessment, in accordance with European Directive 92/43/EEC, commonly known as the Habitats Directive.

1.4 Following consultation with the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England, it is the conclusion of Milton Keynes Council that an SEA is not required for the Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan.

##### **1.5 What is the Neighbourhood Plan trying to achieve?**

1.6 The Neighbourhood Area covers the whole of the Ravenstone Parish Council Area (see Appendix 1), which is a rural parish set in attractive landscape and with considerable heritage assets.

1.7 The plan focusses on the protection of the village's setting in the landscape, with policies to protect views out to the countryside beyond as well as the parish's heritage. The plan allocates a small brownfield site for up to 8 dwellings. The south western part of the site lies within the conservation area and the plan proposes an extension to the settlement boundary of the village to incorporate the new development.

#### **2. Policy context**

2.1 The Milton Keynes Local Plan was formally adopted December 2005. Along with the Core Strategy (see below) the Local Plan provides the statutory land use planning framework for Milton Keynes.

2.2 The Council's Core Strategy was adopted in July 2013. The document contains the vision, objectives and strategic policies for the future of Milton Keynes to 2026, replacing the strategic elements of the Core Strategy.

2.3 Milton Keynes Council is currently preparing a new local plan for the whole borough, called Plan:MK, which, once adopted, will replace the current local plan and Core Strategy. Plan:MK is currently at examination with hearings due to take place in July 2018.

2.4 Although the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and the Core Strategy, it can promote more development, but must not propose less. It will also provide a more local context to the non-strategic policies of the Local Plan.

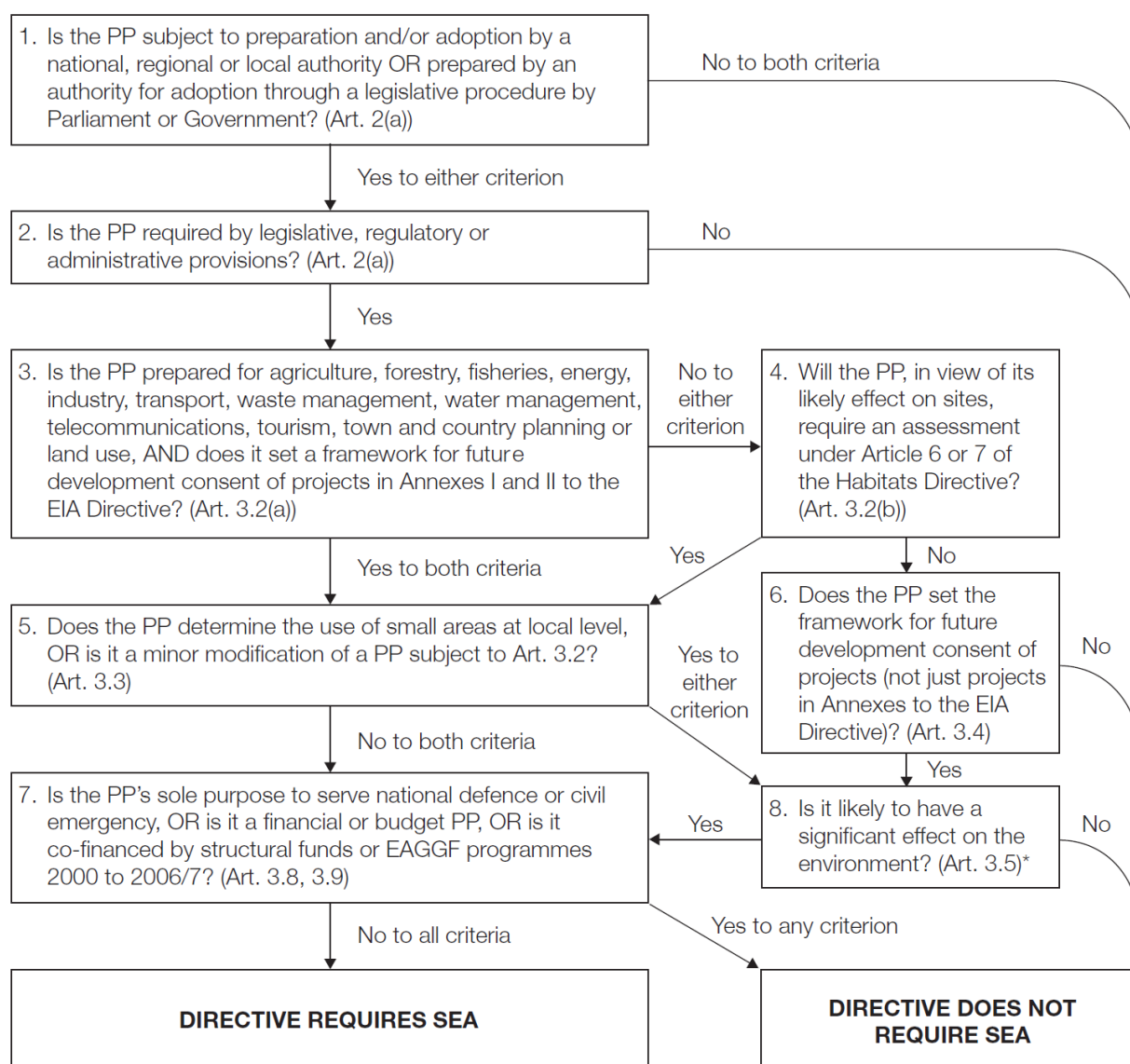
2.4 The Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to public consultation in accordance with the relevant regulations prior to its adoption.

### 3. SEA Screening

3.1 The requirement for a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) is set out in the “Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004”. There is also practical guidance on applying European Directive 2001/42/EC produced by the ODPM (now DCLG)<sup>1</sup>. These documents have been used as the basis for this screening report.

3.2 Neighbourhood Plans must be screened to establish whether or not they will require Strategic Environmental Assessment. The ODPM practical guidance provides a checklist approach based on the SEA regulations to help determine whether SEA is required. This guide has been used as the basis on which to assess the need for SEA as set out below.

Figure 1: Establishing the need for SEA



\*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

<sup>1</sup> A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2005) (ODPM)

Figure 2: Establishing the need for SEA of the Neighbourhood Plan

Stage	Answer	Reason
<b>1. Is the NP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament of Government? (Article 2(a))</b>	Yes	It will be prepared by the Parish Council and adopted by Milton Keynes Council under the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.
<b>2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Article 2(a))</b>	Yes	Although there is no requirement to produce Neighbourhood Plans, they are subject to formal procedures and regulations laid down by national government. In light the European Court of Justice ruling in the Case C-567/10 it is considered that this means the NP is 'required'.
<b>3. Is the NP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2(a))</b>	No	The NP is prepared for town and country planning purposes but does not explicitly set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I or II of the EIA Directive.
<b>4. Will the plan in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats directive?</b>	No	<p>The Core Strategy was screened and it was concluded that appropriate assessment was not required. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the Core Strategy and, although it can propose more development, it is unlikely to be significant enough to require assessment under the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>An Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken for the emerging Plan:MK and that has also concluded that the new emerging local plan will not require assessment under the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>The relatively small level of additional development likely to arise from the Neighbourhood Plan, and its containment within an existing built up area means that it is unlikely to require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive.</p>



<b>6. Does the plan set the framework for future development consent of projects?</b>	Yes	The Neighbourhood Plan will provide a framework for future development consent of projects in the area.
<b>8. Is the NP likely to have a significant effect on the environment?</b>	See results of Figure 3: Determining the likely significance of effects	

Figure 3: Determining the likely significance of effects

<b>SEA Directive Annex II: Criteria for determining likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5)</b>		
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>✓/x/?</b>	<b>MKC Comment</b>
<b><i>The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:</i></b>		
<b>1a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources</b>	✓	The NP will set a framework for future development projects, in terms of location, nature and scale/size. However, the plan will need to be in general conformity with higher level plans so the scope of the plan to fully influence projects and activities is somewhat limited.
<b>1b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy</b>	✓	The NP will form part of the statutory development plan for MK with the same status in decision making as development plan documents.
<b>1c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development</b>	✓	Sustainable development will be at the heart of NPs and policies could make a significant contribution to promoting sustainable development, particularly ensuring any greenfield allocations are planned in a sustainable way.
<b>1d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme</b>	✓	The Environment Agency flood map for Ravenstone identifies much of the village being at risk from surface water (Pluvial) flooding, primarily from surface water running off the surrounding fields when the ground is saturated or during storm events. The Plan includes Policy FR1 which seeks to ensure that new development does not exacerbate and where possible improves the situation.
<b>1e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).</b>	X	The NP is unlikely to be directly relevant in regard to this criterion.
<b><i>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</i></b>		
<b>2a) The probability, duration,</b>	X	In the case of new land allocations it is

<b>frequency and reversibility of the effects</b>		highly probable that policies will lead to development that will have an irreversible impact on the environment, albeit the majority of new land allocations will be on previously developed land. Aside from any new land allocations, any effects of the plan are likely to be reversible, as they will influence the general evolution of the townscape, which has been subject to ongoing change over 100s of years.
<b>2b) The cumulative nature of the effects</b>	X	The cumulative impacts of the effects of the plan on the environment are not expected to be any greater than the individual parts.
<b>2c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects</b>	X	Any impacts are only likely to be felt by the local area.
<b>2d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)</b>	X	It is unlikely that the nature of any development proposed would impact on human health. Any development is likely to be for housing and ancillary uses.
<b>2e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)</b>	X	The effects of the plan are unlikely to be felt in a spatial area wider than the plan area. The plan is also unlikely to affect any population outside the plan area.
<b>2f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</b> <b>I. special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,</b> <b>II. exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values</b> <b>III. intensive land-use</b>	✓/?	The NP covers a rural area and the village contains a number of listed buildings, a Scheduled Ancient Monument and has a defined Conservation Area. The Plan includes policies to preserve and enhance the heritage assets of the area as well as the surrounding landscape character. The selection process for identifying the site allocation has had regard to the effect on the historic environment as well as other constraints and the allocation policy sets out criteria to manage the quality of the development as well as its impact on the existing environment. Overall, it is considered that the value and vulnerability of the plan area is unlikely to be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan policies.
<b>2g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status</b>	X	There are no areas or landscapes with these designations in Milton Keynes.

#### 4. SEA Conclusion

- 4.1 The Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan will provide a planning policy framework to be used when considering planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area.

- 4.2 The Plan's effects are unlikely to have any significant impacts beyond the Neighbourhood Area and it is considered that overall the plan will not have significant effects on the environment. It is, therefore the opinion of Milton Keynes Council that the Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan does not need to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 5. Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening**
- 5.1 Legal protection is afforded to habitats and species of European importance through Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna - known as the 'Habitats Directive'. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive require AA of plans to be undertaken. This involves assessing the contents of plans to ensure that their policies and proposals maintain the integrity of Natura 2000 sites. The assessment must determine whether the plan would adversely affect the nature conservation objectives of each site. Where negative effects can be identified, other options should be examined to avoid any potential damaging effects.
- 5.2 The application of the precautionary principle through the Habitats Directive means that plans can only be permitted once it is shown that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites. In the rare case of there being no alternatives available or over-riding reasons of public interest why a plan needs to be implemented, plans that do have negative impacts may still be approved.
- 6. Screening for Appropriate Assessment**
- 6.1 The first stage in carrying out an Appropriate Assessment for the Habitats Directive is screening, by determining whether the plan is likely to have any significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
- 6.2 The Neighbourhood Plan will be in general conformity with Core Strategy which itself was screened for Appropriate Assessment. The screening process for the Milton Keynes Core Strategy demonstrated that Milton Keynes lies in an area void of any Natura 2000 sites. The nearest European site is the Chiltern Beechwoods to the south of the Borough although it was determined that the site would not be affected by Milton Keynes planning policy due to the distance of the site from Milton Keynes and there being no obvious impact pathways.
- 6.3 However, it was determined that there were two sites which could potentially be affected by the Core Strategy, and other Local Development Documents, due to the pathway provided by the River Great Ouse (which feeds in to Natura 2000 sites). These sites were:
- **Ouse Washes SPA /SAC-** The SPA designation is due to the site's importance as an internationally important assemblage of birds. The presence of the spined loach (*Cobitis taenia*) – the clear water and abundant macrophytes, is particularly important in the Counter Drain, and a healthy population of spined loach is known to occur
  - **Portholme SAC-** It is the largest surviving traditionally-managed meadow in the UK, with an area of 104 ha of alluvial flood meadow. Supports a small population of fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*.
- 6.4 As a result of the screening process it was concluded that:
- The impact of the Core Strategy on water flow will not be significant primarily because Milton Keynes already has a comprehensive flood management system in place that has ensured the effective control of water flows, alongside the continued growth of the city. The Core Strategy will include a continuation of this approach which, informed by the emerging Water Cycle Strategy, will ensure continued effective management of the flow of water into the Great Ouse from Milton Keynes.

- The Growth Strategy developed for the city has used flood risk maps as a key constraint to directions for growth. As such, the broad locations for growth to be identified in the Core Strategy are away from flood risk areas, further reducing the potential of the plan to have a significant impact on water flow.
- In combination with other proposals in the wider Milton Keynes/South Midlands area, it is noted that the majority of proposals affect the River Nene Catchment area (in the case of Northampton) and ultimately the Thames for Aylesbury Vale.

6.5 Considering the above factors, it was concluded Appropriate Assessment for the Core Strategy was not required. The full screening report is available from:  
<http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/planning-policy>

6.6 Since the Appropriate Assessment was undertaken for the Core Strategy, the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits have been granted Special Protection Area status. As with the Ouse Washes SPA/SAC and the Portholme SAC, due to the connection with the River Ouse, development in Milton Keynes could have an impact on the SPA. However, for the same reasons as set out above in paragraph 7.4, it is assessed that any development in Milton Keynes would be unlikely to have a significant affect on the new SPA. Therefore, given that the scope of development in the Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to extend beyond that of the Milton Keynes Core Strategy, it is concluded that the Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA is also unlikely to be significantly affected by the Neighbourhood Plan.

6.7 An Appropriate Assessment has recently been published for the emerging Plan:MK ([http://miltonkeynes.objective.co.uk/portal/planmk/plan\\_mk\\_submission/planmk\\_sa\\_hra?pointId=1510067377589](http://miltonkeynes.objective.co.uk/portal/planmk/plan_mk_submission/planmk_sa_hra?pointId=1510067377589)) which covers the period to 2031. This considers the impact of the emerging Local Plan on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and concludes that “development in the Milton Keynes Local Plan will not have a likely significant effect on any internationally important wildlife sites either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. These conclusions are based on the findings of the AA screening which concludes that no Natura 2000 sites are located within the district and no impact pathways have been identified linking Natura 2000 sites outside of the district e.g. Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/Ramsar to development within Milton Keynes Borough. Therefore an Appropriate Assessment is not required.”

## **7. Appropriate Assessment Conclusion**

7.1 Given the role of Neighbourhood Plans and the scale of development likely to be proposed in the Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that Appropriate Assessment of the plan is not required.

## **8. Consultation Outcome**

8.1 The three statutory bodies for the purposes of SEA Screening are Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England. Following consultation with these bodies by email dated 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2018, the Environment Agency and Natural England agreed with the conclusions in the screening opinion. No response was received from Historic England.

## **Contact**

Further information can be obtained from:

Development Plans  
 Planning and Transport  
 Civic Offices

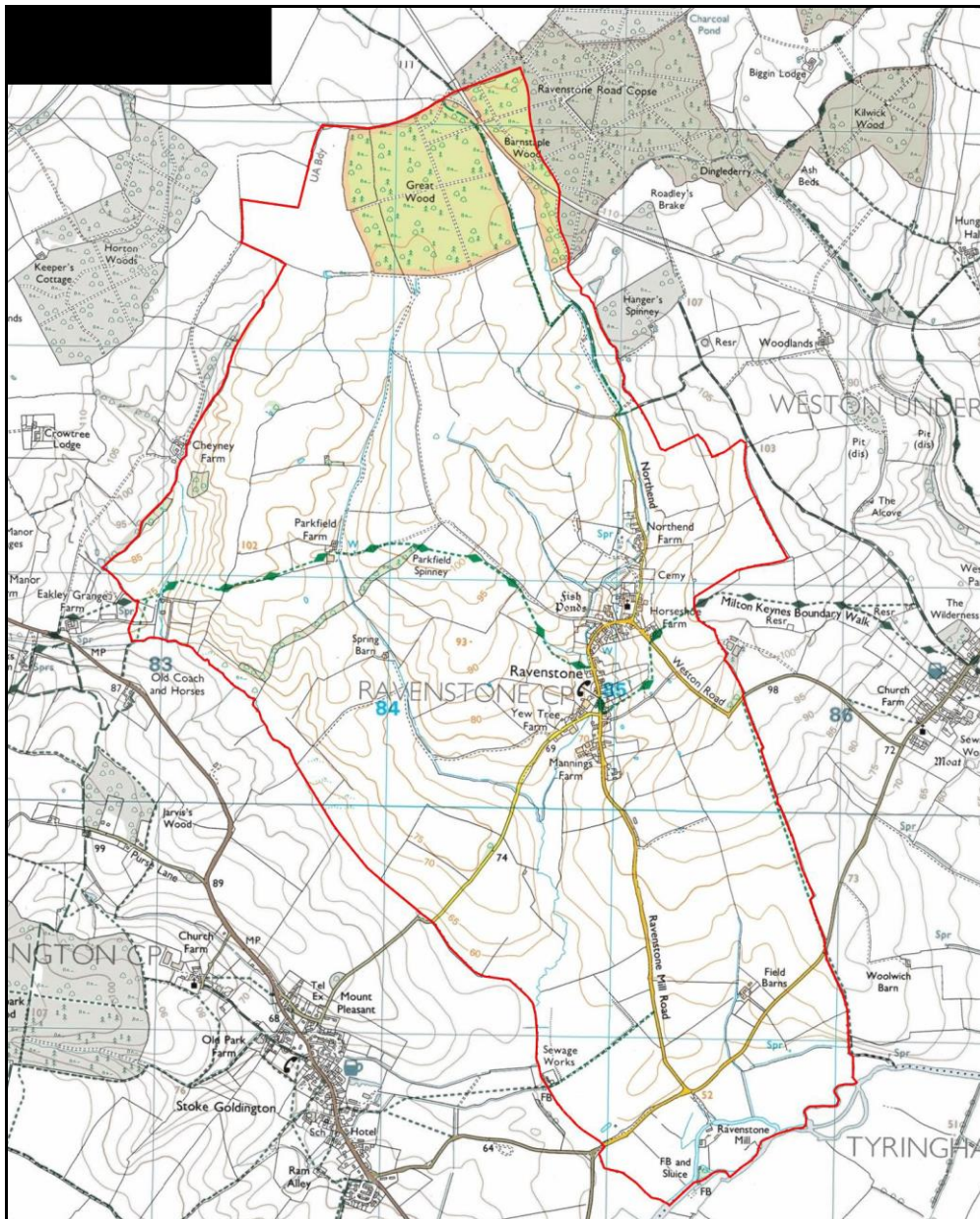
1 Saxon Gate East  
Central Milton Keynes  
MK9 3EJ

W: [www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/planning-policy](http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/planning-policy)

T: 01908 252358

E: [neighbourhoodplanning@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhoodplanning@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1 – map of the Ravenstone Neighbourhood Plan designated area



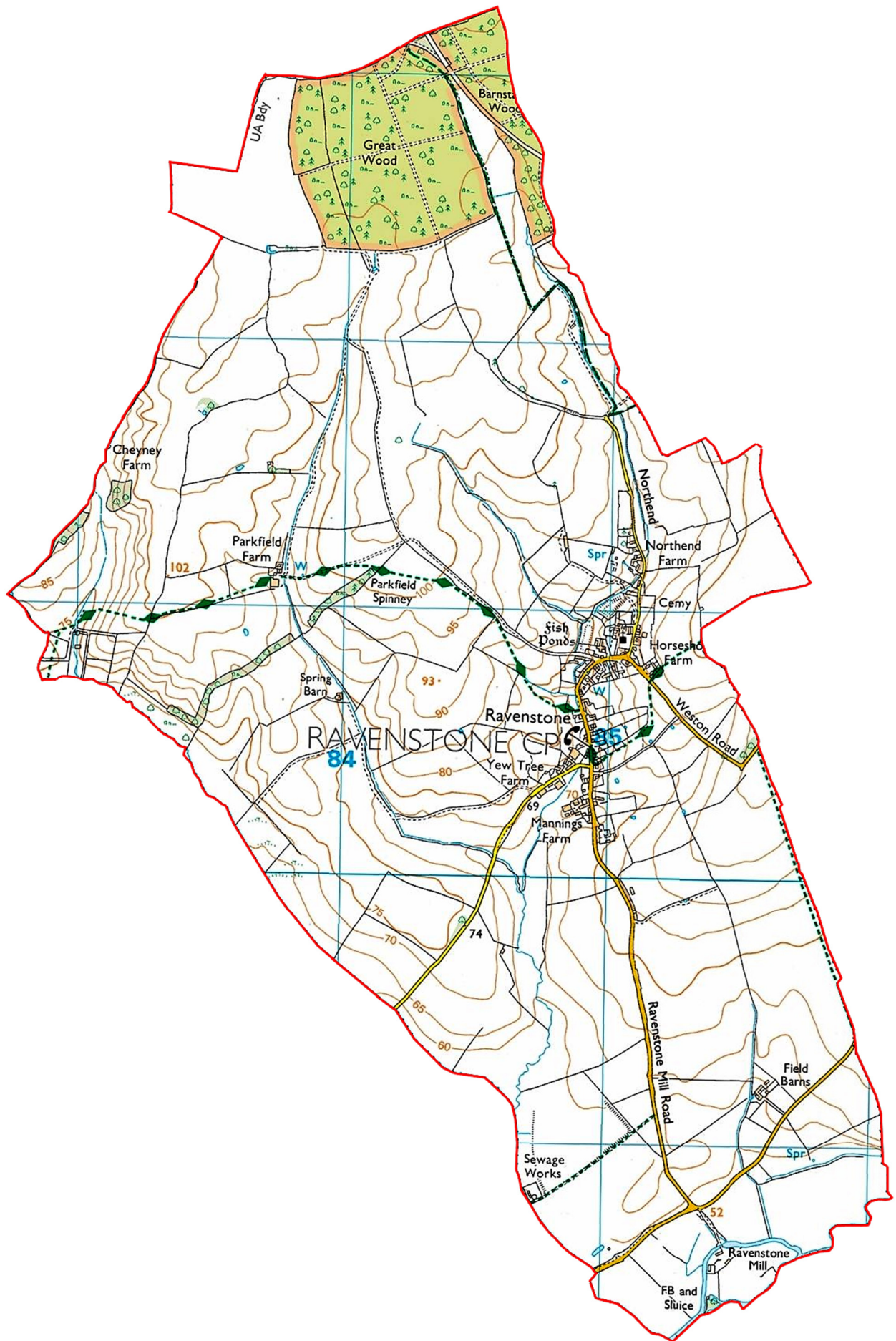




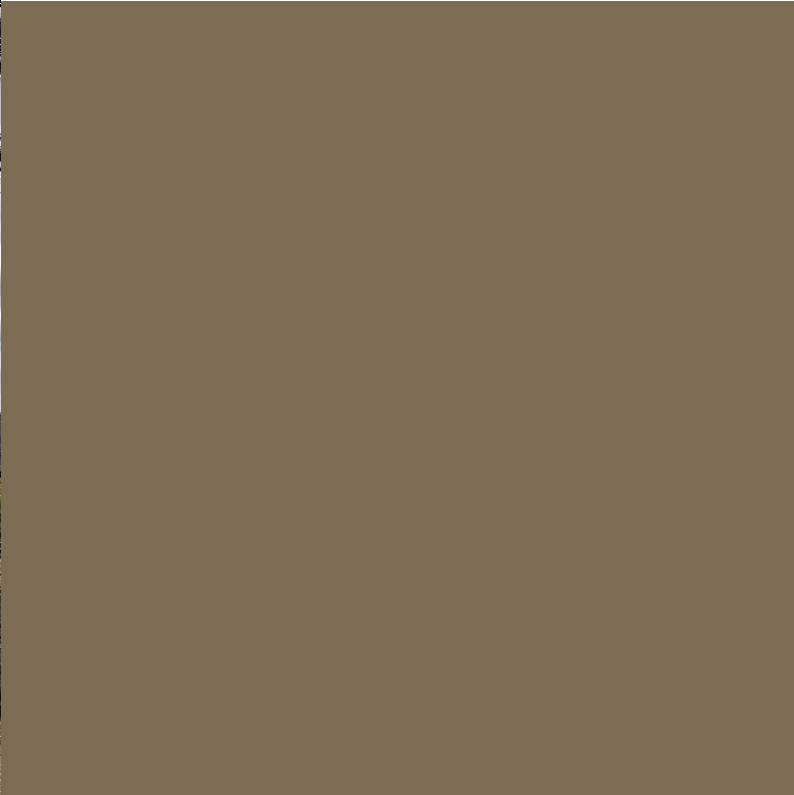
RAVENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Annex B:

Map of Ravenstone  
Neighbourhood Plan  
Designated Area







Prepared with the support of Town Planning Services

The Exchange, Colworth Park, Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire, MK44 1LZ

01234 924 920

[www.townplanning.services](http://www.townplanning.services)

17519-NP03 v1