

John Slater Planning Ltd

# Hanslope Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2016- 2031

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## **Submission Version**

A Report to Milton Keynes Council on the Examination of the Hanslope  
Neighbourhood Plan

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## Executive Summary

My examination has concluded that the Hanslope Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum, subject to the Plan being amended in line with my recommended modifications, which are required to ensure the plan meets the basic conditions. The more noteworthy include –

- Update the development boundary to include areas erroneously omitted from the submission version of the plan.
- Removing Sites A and C from the site allocation policy where development has been commenced.
- Amending the policy relating to views out from the conservation area to the countryside and also removing from the remit of the policy land outside of the conservation area.
- Removing the design criterion dealing with the setting of energy efficiency and other requirements, which are outside the scope of what a neighbourhood plan can address.
- Removing from the list of community facilities, The Recreation Ground as it is protected as local green space and also Lincoln Court.
- Deleting reference to developers being required to transfer the land to the Parish Council, to allow alternative arrangements to be negotiated.

The referendum area does not need to be extended beyond the plan area.

## Introduction

1. Neighbourhood planning is a process, introduced by the Localism Act 2011, which allows local communities to create the policies which will shape the places where they live and work. The Neighbourhood Plan provides the community with the opportunity to allocate land for particular purposes and to prepare the policies which will be used in the determination of planning applications in their area. Once a neighbourhood plan is made, it will form part of the statutory development plan alongside the recently adopted Local Plan - Plan MK 2016-2031. Decision makers are required to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
2. The neighbourhood plan making process has been led by Hanslope Parish Council. A Steering Group was appointed to undertake the plan preparation made up of local volunteers. Hanslope Parish Council is a “qualifying body” under the Neighbourhood Planning legislation.
3. This report is the outcome of my examination of the Submission Version of the Hanslope Neighbourhood Plan. My report will make recommendations based on my findings on whether the Plan should go forward to a referendum. If the plan then receives the support of over 50% of those voting at the referendum, the Plan will be “made” by Milton Keynes Council.

## The Examiner’s Role

4. I was initially appointed by Milton Keynes Council in February 2019, with the agreement of Hanslope Parish Council, to conduct this examination. My role is known as an Independent Examiner. My selection has been facilitated by the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service (NPIERS) which is administered by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).
5. In order for me to be appointed to this role, I am required to be appropriately experienced and qualified. I have over 40 years’ experience as a planning practitioner, primarily working in local government, which included 8 years as a Head of Planning at a large unitary authority on the south coast, but latterly as an independent planning consultant and director of John Slater Planning Ltd. I am a Chartered Town Planner and a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute. I am independent of both Milton Keynes Council and Hanslope Parish Council and I can confirm that I have no interest in any land that is affected by the Neighbourhood Plan.

6. Under the terms of the neighbourhood planning legislation I am required to make one of three possible recommendations:
  - That the plan should proceed to referendum on the basis that it meets all the legal requirements.
  - That the plan should proceed to referendum if modified.
  - That the plan should not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet all the legal requirements.
7. Furthermore, if I am to conclude that the Plan should proceed to referendum, I need to consider whether the area covered by the referendum should extend beyond the boundaries of the area covered by the Hanslope Neighbourhood Plan area.
8. In examining the Plan, the Independent Examiner is expected to address the following questions
  - a. Do the policies relate to the development and use of land for a Designated Neighbourhood Plan area in accordance with Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004?
  - b. Does the Neighbourhood Plan meet the requirements of Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 - namely that it specifies the period to which it is to have effect? It must not relate to matters which are referred to as “excluded development” and also that it must not cover more than one Neighbourhood Plan area.
  - c. Has the Neighbourhood Plan been prepared for an area designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted by a qualifying body?
9. I am able to confirm that the Plan does relate only to the development and use of land, covering the area designated by Milton Keynes Council, for the Hanslope Neighbourhood Plan, on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015, if it is modified in accordance with my recommendations.
10. I can also confirm that it does specify the period over which the plan has effect namely the period from 2016 up to 2031.
11. I can confirm that the plan does not cover any “excluded development”.
12. There are no other neighbourhood plans covering the area covered by the neighbourhood area designation.
13. Hanslope Parish Council, as a parish council, is a qualifying body under the terms of the legislation.

## **The Examination Process**

14. The presumption is that the neighbourhood plan will proceed by way of an examination of written evidence only. However, the Examiner can ask for a public hearing in order to hear oral evidence on matters which he or she wishes to explore further or if a person has a fair chance to put a case.

15. I am required to give reasons for each of my recommendations and also provide a summary of my main conclusions.
16. I am satisfied that I am in a position to properly examine the plan without the need for a hearing.
17. I carried out an unaccompanied visit to Hanslope and the surrounding countryside on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2019. I was able to walk around the village centre and drive around the Parish to familiarise myself with the plan area.
18. Following my site visit and my initial assessment of the plan, I had a number of matters on which I wished to receive further information, both from the Parish Council and the Borough Council. That request was set out in a document entitled *Initial Comments of the Independent Examiner* dated 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019. I received a response from the Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019 and from the Parish Council on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019.
19. Following the receipt of the Parish Council's comments, I received an unsolicited letter from Smith Jenkins who are planning consultants for Mc Cann Homes, who were promoting the allocation of the equestrian centre. Their letter was responding to comments made by the Parish Council following my invitation for them to comment on the Regulation 16 representations. They again requested that I call a public hearing. I asked the LPA to respond to this letter on my behalf to the letter, as it would be inappropriate for me as Examiner to be entering into direct correspondence with third parties. I repeated that I did not believe that it was necessary, for my consideration of the issues, to call a hearing, as it would not in my opinion assist in my examination and that the matter was for my discretion. I invited the Parish Council to comment on the Smith Jenkins letter and I received a response on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019.
20. All documents have been placed on the respective websites.

## The Consultation Process

21. It was decided that the main vehicle for engaging with local residents, would be the two Parish Council open meetings held each year, in April and October coupled with "new public time" at the start of each Parish Council meeting where the Neighbourhood Plan would be a regular item. During this time, the Parish Council was having to respond to a number of large residential developments which were being promoted in around the two main settlements, Hanslope and Long Street and this was the focus of public engagement.
22. At the start of the process in the summer of 2016, a residents' survey was prepared and distributed around the village and the results have guided the Parish Council's approach to new development.
23. The initial steering group which was set up in early 2016, was expanded in November that year and divided the planned work into nine working groups.

This led to the production of the first draft of the plan in February 2017. Escalating concern regarding the housing proposals resulted in the work of the Steering Group being concentrated with one sub group looking at the housing needs of the village/parish and the second to work on the remainder of the plan. Work progressed towards the end of the year with the preparation of the Character and Design Statement.

24. All this activity culminated with the preparation of the Pre- Submission version of the plan and the decision was taken to appoint an independent “Consultation Co-coordinator” to oversee the public consultation.
25. This was subject of a seven-week consultation, known as the Regulation 14 Consultation, organised by the Parish Council, which ran from 23<sup>rd</sup> June until 12<sup>th</sup> August 2018. Only four responses came from the village residents and responses were received from parties acting on behalf of developers, plus representations from Councillor Proctor and two other persons. An open public meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2018 showed that there was a large expression of support for the plan. The written responses are summarised in the Consultation Statement.

## Regulation 16 Consultation

26. I have had regard, in carrying out this examination, to all the comments made during the period of final consultation which took place over a 6-week period, between 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and 18<sup>th</sup> January 2019. This consultation was organised by Milton Keynes Council, prior to the plan being passed to me for its examination. That stage is known as the Regulation 16 Consultation.
27. In total, 10 individual responses were received from Natural England, Anglian Water, National Grid, Historic England, Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council, Castlethorpe Parish Council, The Canal and Rivers Trust, Smith Jenkins on behalf of Mc Cann Homes, Sherwell Drake Forbes, and Proctors – Chartered Surveyors.
28. I have carefully read all the correspondence and I will refer to the representations where it is relevant to my considerations and conclusions in respect of specific policies or the plan as a whole.

## The Basic Conditions

29. The Neighbourhood Planning Examination process is different to a Local Plan Examination, in that the test is not one of “soundness”. The Neighbourhood Plan is tested against what is known as the Basic Conditions which are set down in legislation. It will be against these criteria that my examination must focus.

30. The five questions, which seek to establish that the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions test, are: -
- Is it appropriate to make the Plan having regard to the national policies and advice contained in the guidance issued by the Secretary of State?
  - Will the making of the Plan contribute to the achievement of sustainable development?
  - Will the making of the Plan be in general conformity with the strategic policies set out in the Development Plan for the area?
  - Will the making of the Plan breach or be otherwise incompatible with EU obligations or human rights legislation?
  - Will the making of the Plan breach the requirements of Regulation 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017?
31. During the course of this examination the Government issued a revised National Planning Policy Framework. However, in accordance with the stipulation of Paragraph 214 of the 2019 NPPF, this examination has been carried out applying the policies in the 2012 version of the Framework.

## **Compliance with the Development Plan**

32. To meet the basic conditions test, the Neighbourhood Plan is required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan, which in this case is Plan: MK 2016-2031, which was adopted by Milton Keynes Council on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019, alongside the Site Allocations Plan 2018, the Minerals Local Plan 2017 and the Waste DPD 2008.
33. The plan's overarching housing objective is to deliver a minimum of 26,500 net new homes, to be built in the period 2016 – 31, importantly within and adjacent to the urban areas of the borough.
34. Policy DS2 sets out the housing strategy and this includes "permitting development proposals within the defined settlement boundaries, where they comply with all other relevant policies of Plan: MK and neighbourhood plans."
35. Appendix A lists sites that are considered commitments and this list includes HS100: Land between 36 and 38 Long Street Road – 3 units, HS101: Castlethorpe Road – 150 units and HS 102: Land Off Long Street Road – 141 units.



## Compliance with European and Human Rights Legislation

36. Milton Keynes Council issued a Screening Statement, in October 2018 which concluded, having consulted with the three statutory consultees, that a full assessment, as required by EU Directive 2001/42/EC which is enshrined into UK law by the “Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004”, would not be required, as its view was that the Plan’s effects are unlikely to have significant effects on the environment.
37. The Borough Council, as competent authority, also issued in the same report, its screening under the Habitat Regulations. This screening assessed the submitted plan and concluded that it would not have any adverse effects upon the European protected sites, namely the Ouse Washes SAC / SPA and Portholme SAC and an Appropriate Assessment would not be required.
38. I am satisfied that the basic conditions regarding compliance with European legislation, including the newly introduced basic condition regarding compliance with the Habitat Regulations, are met. I am also content that the plan has no conflict with the Human Rights Act. I note that one representation refers to site owners not having an opportunity to formally promote their site but they have had and taken opportunities to make their representations on this plan.

## The Neighbourhood Plan: An Overview

39. I must firstly commend the Steering Group for preparing three well-presented submission documents. This is a clearly written and focused neighbourhood plan, which deals with the matters in a concise manner.
40. The starting point for the consideration of this neighbourhood plan is the expectations as to the level of residential development for the two villages contained in the adopted local plan – Plan: MK. This neighbourhood plan has been prepared in parallel with the work undertaken by Milton Keynes Council on the new local plan. Plan: MK does not set a specific housing figure for Hanslope, or indeed for any individual villages. It leaves the level of housing for each village to be determined by neighbourhood plans, with the expectation that any new residential development will take place within development boundaries.
41. Milton Keynes Council has advised me that this approach has been taken in recognition of “the large number of existing commitments within the rural area... already contributing towards Plan: MK’s housing supply”. It was therefore felt by the Council, to be inappropriate to allocate further growth to

the rural areas. This view was endorsed by the Plan: MK Inspector. This is an up-to-date local plan, having been only adopted in March 2019.

42. Milton Keynes Council's practice is not to issue a bespoke housing figure to neighbourhood plan areas, but if one is requested by the neighbourhood plan group, the requirement will be set at 1 unit, over and above any existing allocations. This allows a community to promote more housing, if that is the wish of the residents. The Council does say that a future review of Plan: MK will set housing requirements for designated neighbourhood areas and in view of that, this matter should be kept under review, to ensure that the neighbourhood plan remains in conformity with the strategic policies in any future local plan, and therefore will be relevant to the determination of planning applications, having regard to the provisions of the neighbourhood plan legislation that states when policies are in conflict between the local plan and the neighbourhood plan, the presumption should be in accordance with the provisions of the most recently adopted plan.
43. I can, in some respects, fully understand the difficulties facing the Parish Council in preparing this neighbourhood plan. The Parish Council, having sought the views of the community, who responded that it would only support small scale residential development, were faced with proposals that seemed to be diametrically opposed to what the residents were saying was their vision for new development in the parish. It is, however inevitable that the plan making system and the wider development environment do not neatly coincide. The outcome of the Hanslope neighbourhood plan making process is evidence of that difficulty and, in many respects, offers a pragmatic response.
44. These parallel processes must have, at some stages, undermined resident's faith in the neighbourhood plan system, where the onus is on the community to be able to shape their vision for the village. However, the inherent tension is between a need to respond to the government's clear ambition that the planning system should be delivering a significant boost in housing, with the specific requirement imposed by the 2012 NPPF that local planning authorities should be able to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing, set against a move to "localism", offering the local community the opportunity to decide the location of development within its area, consistent with the strategic policies in the development plan.
45. During the very period that this neighbourhood plan was being prepared, Milton Keynes Council could not demonstrate that it had a 5-year housing supply and therefore its policies related to the location of housing were not considered to be up to date and the presumption changed from adherence to policies in the development plan to a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The outcomes of the large-scale planning applications are not surprising in that context.
46. Hanslope Parish is not unique in facing these dilemmas and across the country many communities expressed their disillusionment at planning appeal

decisions, as they felt it undermined newly made neighbourhood plans or plans being prepared in line with resident's aspirations. As a result, the Government issued revised national planning guidance, offering reduced housing supply figures in areas where a neighbourhood plan had been *made* in the last two years and that plan allocates land for housing. Under these conditions, then the requirement to identify deliverable housing sites is reduced from 5 years to 3 years. Therefore, the risks are reduced, but are not eliminated.

47. As I understand it, Milton Keynes Council is claiming that it now has a five-year housing land supply.
48. The Parish Council's evident frustration has tainted the language used in the neighbourhood plan document, as well as the accompanying submissions. As one Regulation 16 representation states "The tone of the plan remains pejorative". The plan in its Foreword refers to the needs of having to "include the two-proposed large-scale residential developments of the type that the survey clearly showed the residents are not in favour of". There is a whole section of the submission document that describes Community Views on Planning Issues. To cite another example of inappropriate language to be included within one part of the development plan, "The hope and expectation that it (*the plan*) will enable Milton Keynes Council to manage development in the parish more successfully than in the past". That is not helpful, if the plan that the Council is implementing, is openly criticising that Council. It is only necessary for the plan to acknowledge that planning permissions exist on these sites.
49. There are many instances where the wording of the plan could be interpreted as "anti-development", for example phrases such as "developers taking advantage" show a particular bias which is unsuited to a plan making body. Whilst this may be an expression of the Parish Councillors' views, particularly their frustration at the decisions taken on the planning applications, nevertheless the neighbourhood plan will be a document that forms part of the Milton Keynes statutory development plan and will be used by a range of decision makers. The underlying purpose of the planning system is to deliver "sustainable development" which is one of the Basic Conditions that this examination must consider. The three strands of sustainable development include "supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations ... whilst protecting the natural, built and historic environment, .... ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places." Paragraph 16 of the NPPF states that "the application of the presumption (*in favour of sustainable development*) will have implications for how communities engage in neighbourhood planning". Critically it will mean that neighbourhoods should "plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area, that is outside the strategic elements of the local plan". This is reinforced by the message of the then minister of

Planning, Greg Clark in the foreword of the NPPF (2012) “Development that is sustainable should go ahead, without delay - a presumption in favour of sustainable development that is the basis for every plan, and every decision”

50. I am satisfied that the actual policies themselves in the plan do this, but the language used in document is somewhat “grudging”. I would strongly recommend that the Parish Council should rigorously review the whole text of the supporting justifications, so that the neighbourhood plan can be seen to be “planning positively” and shaping development that will be taking place in the plan area. The developers will be building homes in the village for new families and other households, who will be able to enjoy the amenities this lovely village has to offer. Specifically, I would question the inclusion of section 4 of the plan – *Community views on planning issues*, in the Referendum Version of the plan, which may have had limited value in describing the context of the preparation of this plan, but now that the decisions on the major housing schemes at Long Street Road and Castlethorpe Road have gone through, is of little relevance to decision making which will be based on the policies in the plan
51. As well as urging the Parish Council to have a wholesale review of the language of the plan, I am recommending that also, following the adoption of the local plan, large sections of the supporting text are now out of date especially when referencing previous development plans and the “emerging local plan”. Much needs to be updated. I consider that it is beyond my remit as examiner to undertake the task, but it is for the plan’s authors, in conjunction with the planners at Milton Keynes Council to ensure that the next version will reflect the post adoption Plan:MK, rather than the situation when the submission version of the plan was being prepared. That will allow a more cogent and relevant justification to be offered for the policies in the plan. Other changes are likely as a result of my recommendations, so that the referendum version of plan reads as a coherent planning document.

### **Recommendation**

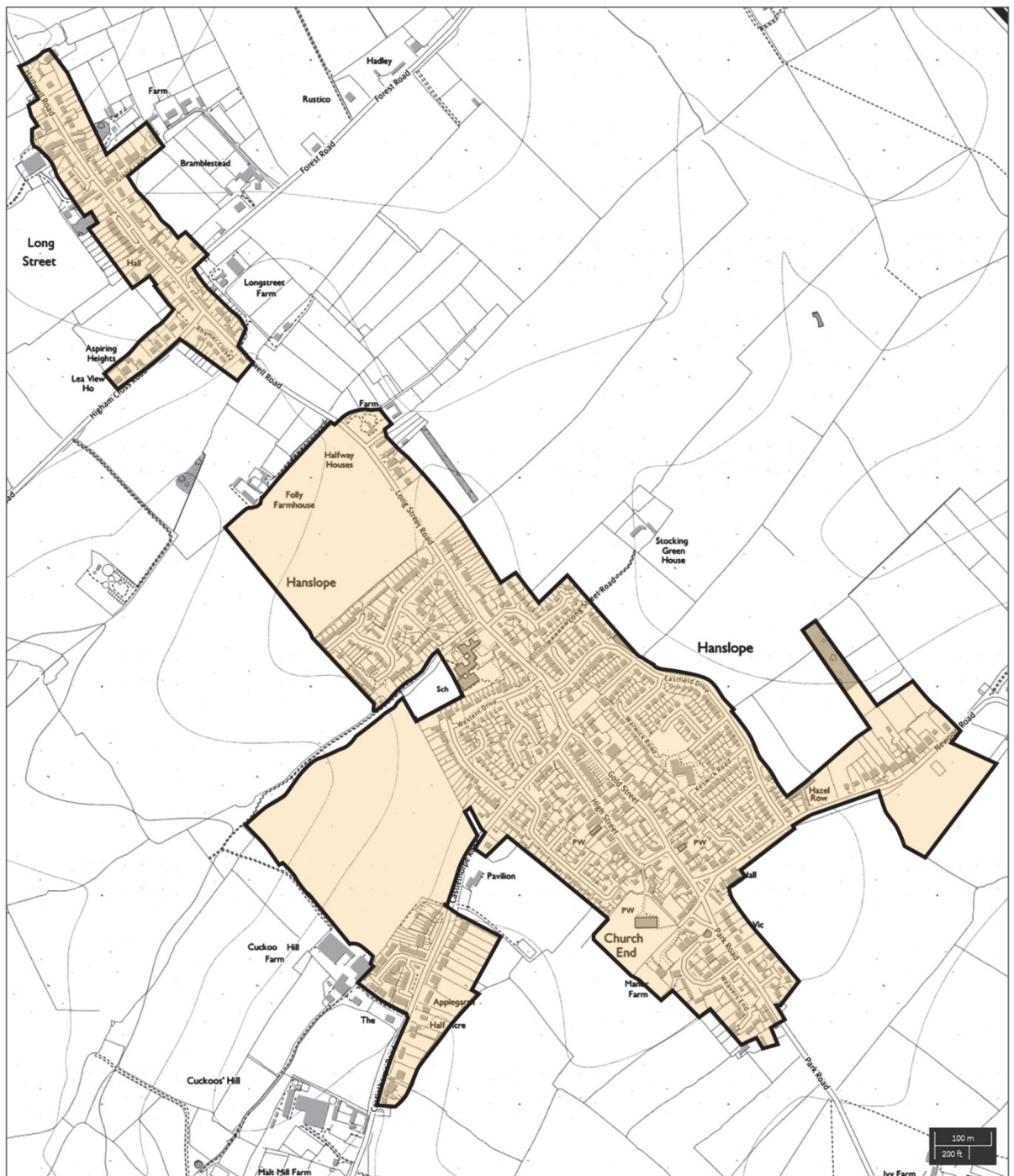
***The supporting text is updated to reflect that the Local Plan is now adopted, and to review the language and tone of the supporting text to demonstrate that the plan has been “prepared positively”.***

## **The Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies**

### **Policy HAN1: Hanslope and Long Street Development boundary**

52. The establishment of development boundaries is important in terms of the adopted local plan, which in rural areas allows neighbourhood plans to define levels of development, but requires in Policy DS 1 that this development should be located inside the development boundary. It is therefore a policy tool to differentiate areas where most development is deemed to be acceptable and the open countryside where development is more restricted. I

did note on my site visit some apparent irregularities as to areas that had been excluded and I raised these in my Initial Comments paper. The Parish Council in its response acknowledged a number of omissions and I have invited it to submit a revised boundary for my consideration. This is set out below and includes the full extent of the allocation site off Castlethorpe Road, the houses on the north side of Long Street Road and the properties off Newport Road, northeast of Hazel Row. I understand that the properties had been included in the Pre-Submission version of the Plan and so the residents would have had a chance to be aware of the intention to include their property in the development boundary.



### **Recommendation**

***Replace Policy Map HAN1 Hanslope & Long Street Development Boundaries with the above map.***

### **Policy HAN2: Housing development sites**

53. This policy supports residential development on five sites. Three of the sites have either full planning permission or outline consent with reserved matters having been fully discharged. Not only is planning consent in place in the case of Sites A and C but development has also been commenced. This could produce an interesting scenario, with the new residents of houses being able to vote at referendum, for the neighbourhood plan that includes a proposed allocation of the land where they are now living.
54. I did question the value of retaining the allocation of the implemented development, as the Local Plan is showing the developments as commitments. The response from the Parish Council was that it had hoped that the plan would have been “made” before Sites A and C had commenced, but events have effectively overtaken the submission of the plan. It felt that, following the principles established by the Examiner of the Sherington Neighbourhood Plan, the inclusion of the sites would negate the need for the plan to provide additional sites. The contrary view was expressed by the Local Planning Authority, that for those developments where the details of the development had already been established, “there seems little value in retaining the site-specific policies in the plan.” It does concede that where development has not commenced, that there is a value in maintaining the policy as the developer could seek to amend the approved scheme. These sites are acknowledged in the Local Plan as commitments, so it would be perverse to include them as an allocation in another part of the development plan. I note that the supporting text to the neighbourhood plan policy suggests that the allocation will guide reserved matters applications but this has effectively been superseded by decisions taken on development management applications. I therefore propose to remove from the policy, Sites A and C, but retain the allocations on sites B, D and E, which can accordingly be re-numbered.
55. In terms of site D, land comprising redundant garages and carpark off William Close, the allocation is for “approximately eight care bungalows”. From my visit, I witnessed for myself the condition of the garages and their location in what is predominantly a residential area, contained within the settlement. I cannot rule out the suitability of the site for alternative forms of residential development, other than care bungalows. I am satisfied that issues of access and turning circles raised in one representation can be resolved at the development management stage.
56. The removal of the allocation sites will not, in my opinion, have implications in terms of requiring the village to deliver additional development under the current strategic policy framework.

57. I have noted the representations submitted on behalf of the potential developers of Milton Keynes Equestrian Centre, that their site should be allocated. The NPPF (2012) includes as a core principle that the planning system should “encourage effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land) ... provided it is not of high environmental quality”. I will not suggest that this site is of “high environmental quality”. The policy merely refers to the site being “reused”, but does not suggest that residential use will necessarily be the only use the site can be put. The site falls outside the proposed development boundary and Local Plan Policy DS2 points to new housing developments being focused on “land in, or adjacent to the existing urban areas of Milton Keynes as well as the three key settlements by... the redevelopment of brownfield sites, vacant or underused sites within Milton Keynes urban area.”

58. In view of the significant amount of development already committed to Hanslope, I do not consider it necessary to recommend the allocation of any additional land, especially land that lies outside the settlement boundary. I am aware that there is a planning appeal currently running on the site for a development of 51 houses, as well as the separate proposal for residential development on adjacent land. I do not consider that it is my role to recommend the allocation of additional land, in the absence of a strategic requirement, as set out in the local plan. However, were planning consent to be granted on appeal on these sites, I would recommend that the Parish Council seriously considers undertaking a review of the development strategy boundary, to reflect the reality of any consented development, which would then effectively consolidate new development in the south west corner of the village.

### **Recommendations**

***Delete Site A and Site C and renumber the remaining 3 sites.***

***Amend the Housing Development Sites Map accordingly.***

***Under Site D replace “care bungalows” with “units”***

### **Policy HAN3: Design in the Hanslope Conservation Area**

59. My only comment in respect of the policy, relates to the treatment of views. As the policy only covers development taking place inside the Conservation Area, the fourth criterion deals with key views from within the village or its edge, out to the surrounding countryside and from the countryside to the village and its setting in its landscape. However, all the key views as set out in the Key Views drawings are shown across land that falls outside the Conservation Area. Whilst these are views of the Conservation Area, those views will not be impacted by any development that takes place within the Conservation Area, which is the remit of this policy. I will recommend that this part of the policy is excluded, although the protection of the views of the Conservation Area and

St James's Church, in particular, will be retained by the requirements set out in Policy HAN4.

### **Recommendations**

**Delete the fourth bullet point.**

**Remove Policy HAN3 from the title of the Key Views Map.**

### **Policy HAN4: Design and Development Principles in the Parish**

60. In order to provide certainty as to what are considered to be the key views, which a decision maker is required to take account of, I will recommend the insertion of reference in the fifth bullet point "as shown on the Key Views Map".
61. I invited the Parish Council to reassess whether the key views as set out in the plan were still relevant now that reserved matters approval had been given on a number of the sites. Its response is that it wished to see them retained apart from the view shown to the rear of Cuckoo View Rise.
62. The penultimate bullet point imposes requirements that proposals seek to maximise the energy efficiency of buildings and, incorporate where it is appropriate, renewable and low carbon energy production". Such requirements are contrary to the Secretary of State's policy as set out in his Written Statement to the House of Commons, dated 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015 that "neighbourhood plans should not impose any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings". I will propose the removal of that requirement as it does not need basic conditions.

### **Recommendations**

**In the fifth bullet point after "key views" insert "as shown on the Key Views Map"**

**Delete the penultimate bullet point.**

**Delete the view arrow from the rear of Cuckoo View Rise**

### **Policy HAN5: Retail and Commercial Uses**

63. I have no comments to make on this policy.

### **Policy HAN 6: Rural Economic Development**

64. I have no comments to make on this policy.

### **Policy HAN7: Community Facilities**

65. The recreation ground is proposed to be designated as a local green space, which offers a greater degree of protection than this policy. There is no value in duplicating policies to protect the same facility however the policy can still protect the pavilion and the Scout and Guide Building. I propose that the recreation ground be removed from the list of community facilities. I believe to



give clarity as to which “chapels” are included in the designation the policy identified should identify Hanslope Methodist Chapel and Hanslope Gospel Hall, as well as St James Church.

66. I do not consider that facilities at Lincoln Court constitute a community facility that warrants protection by a development plan policy. As described in the response to my Initial Comments document, Lincoln Court is the sheltered housing development, whose managers allow its common room and small kitchen to be used on an intermittent basis for some charity events. I consider that such occasional use does not warrant protection of this policy, if for example, the management policy of the building was to change or the facility were to be redeveloped.

### **Recommendations**

***In ii. omit “sports facilities,”***

***In v. replace” and the two other chapels” with “Hanslope Methodist Chapel and Hanslope Gospel Hall.”***

***Delete vi. Lincoln Court.***

### **Policy HAN8: Local Green Spaces**

67. I am satisfied that all four green spaces warrant designation as local green space and meet the criteria set out in paragraphs 76 and 77 of the NPPF (2012) apart from the pumping station at the allotments site.
68. I have had regard to the comments of Anglian Water regard the constraint that LGS designation would have on the Hanslope Sewage Pumping Station and any required works. I do not consider that this small compound is justified as LGS and I will recommend that the site be excluded from the area shown as allotments.

### **Recommendation**

***Remove the Sewage Pumping Station from the area shown as the allotments in the Local Green Space Map.***

### **Policy HAN9: Green Infrastructure**

69. The policy places a possible requirement on developers “to transfer the land to the Parish Council, by agreement with the planning authority.” That is unreasonable requirement, offering developers no alternative method of delivery, when the matter should be the subject of one of negotiation, as it could be appropriate for different arrangements for the future ownership or management of such lands to be proposed, such as a management company.
70. As written, the requirement is that all new development must propose biodiversity mitigation strategies, with the aim of delivering a net biodiversity gain. However, some developments could take place which has no impact on biodiversity e.g. roof extension or new shopfront. Therefore, the requirements set out in the third paragraph should be caveated with “Where it is appropriate”.

### **Recommendations**

**Delete the second sentence of the second paragraph.**

**At the start of the third paragraph insert “Where it is appropriate,”**

### **The Referendum Area**

71. If I am to recommend that the Plan progresses to its referendum stage, I am required to confirm whether the referendum should cover a larger area than the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan. In this instance, I can confirm that the area of the Hanslope Neighbourhood Plan as designated by Milton Keynes Council on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015, is the appropriate area for the referendum to be held and the area for the referendum does not need to be extended.

### **Summary**

72. I must congratulate Hanslope Parish Council on grasping the opportunities presented by neighbourhood planning to allow the community to shape its planning policies. I know that this has been a difficult process and this has influenced some of the language and tone of the plan. I really hope that the Parish Council, now the neighbourhood plan has reached this important milestone, responds positively to my suggestion to both revisit some of the language of the plan and also update much of the justification to reflect the adoption of the Local Plan and the planning permissions now fully granted.

73. This is a locally distinct neighbourhood plan, which will provide a sound basis for dealing with planning applications in the Parish in the coming years.

74. The changes I have had to make are all required to ensure that the policies comply with the basic conditions.

75. To conclude, I can confirm that my overall conclusions are that the Plan, if amended in line with my recommendations, meets all the statutory requirements including the basic conditions test and that it is appropriate, if successful at referendum, that the Plan, as amended, be made.

**76. I am therefore delighted to recommend to Milton Keynes Council that the Hanslope Neighbourhood Plan, as modified by my recommendations, should now proceed to referendum.**

JOHN SLATER BA(Hons), DMS, MRTPI

John Slater Planning Ltd

6<sup>th</sup> June 2019