

## **Hanslope Parish Council and NP Working Group observations on the letter to John Slater from Smith Jenkins**

**1 May 2019**

Dear Mr Slater

Thankyou for giving us the opportunity to reply to the letter written to you by Smith Jenkins. In the circumstances, the Parish Council and its Neighbourhood Plan Working Group believe it would be remiss of us to try and set out a full reply to all of the concerns set out in their letter.

However, there is one matter to which we must respond and that is the theme which runs through the letter from Smith Jenkins, that the Parish Council and its NP Working Group are anti-development.

The Parish Council is a body elected to represent the interests of the residents of the parish. For the purposes of developing a Neighbourhood Plan acceptable to both the residents of the parish and the local authority, a Working Group was set up consisting of members of the Parish Council and prominent residents of the village. This group has tried to develop a plan based on the views of the large majority of the residents taken from the Parish Survey undertaken at the start of the process.

In brief, this survey clearly indicated that residents were happy to see sustainable small scale development in appropriate locations, which took account of the infrastructure of the parish to cope in particular with such issues regarding increased traffic, health care and school facilities whilst maintaining the environmental viability of a rural village within a working agricultural context.

Unfortunately, as we have clearly set out in the Consultation Statement, our ability to achieve this was, at a very early stage, severely compromised. This was due to the actions of potential developers who submitted five large scale planning applications, which took no account of the limited infrastructure. They were encouraged by issues over the lack of a Five Year Land Supply for the Milton Keynes area and a completed Hanslope Neighbourhood Plan.

This meant that at the same time the Parish Council and its Neighbourhood Plan Working Group were trying to develop a meaningful plan which residents would pass at the referendum stage, the Parish Council, together with Ward Councillors and residents, were having to oppose these large scale developments, as well as some smaller ones submitted during the same period which unfortunately merely added to the infrastructure problems.

Consequently the submitted Neighbourhood Plan has had to take into account two of these large scale development proposals which achieved outline planning permission within two years of our development of the plan i.e. the 291 new houses at the Castlethorpe Rd and Long Street Rd sites. It has not however, included any of the other three applications which were submitted at a slightly later stage than the first two, on sites which would have potentially added another 400 plus houses to the village, i.e. those at 1) the Equestrian Centre, 2) land between Cuckoo Hill Rise and the Equestrian Centre and 3) land off Eastfield Drive.

All three of these proposed developments were strongly objected to by the Parish Council, Ward Councillors and residents. All three were refused outline planning permission by the Milton Keynes Development Control Committee; in the case of the Equestrian Centre on two occasions. Permission

was refused on the grounds that these were not seen as appropriate, sustainable locations for residential development, given the context of the cumulative pressures on the infrastructure of the village which have been exacerbated by the two developments which gained permission before the planning circumstances facing the village changed.

Yours sincerely

C M Palmer

Chair, Hanslope Parish Council