



NEWPORT PAGNELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Final Modification Proposal Statement

Prepared in accordance with Regulation 15(1)(f) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) in respect of the Final Modification Proposal to the made Newport Pagnell Neighbourhood Plan.

December 2020

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Introduction

As a 'Qualifying Body', the Newport Pagnell Town Council ("the Town Council") proposes to modify the made Newport Pagnell Neighbourhood Plan ("the Made Plan") of June 2016. This Statement is submitted as part of the documentation with the proposed modified Neighbourhood Plan ("the Modified Plan"), alongside a Basic Conditions Statement and a Consultation Statement, in accordance with Regulation 15(1)(f) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

Both the Town Council and the Local Planning Authority, Milton Keynes Council (MKC), consider that the proposals represent a combination of material and non-material modifications to the Made Plan. None are considered so significant or substantial, either alone or in combination, as to change the nature of the Made Plan. It is therefore more in the nature of a material update, which can be made without a referendum in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2017/1243 ("the Regulations"). Regulation 15 of the amended 2012 Regulations requires:

"in relation to a modification proposal, a statement setting out whether or not the qualifying body considers that the modifications contained in the modification proposal are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the neighbourhood development plan which the modification proposal would modify, giving reasons for why the qualifying body is of this opinion".

This Statement serves this purpose and notes the following additional requirements in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) :

- *"the qualifying body must (at the pre-submission publicity and consultation stage and when the modified plan is submitted to the local planning authority) state whether they believe that the modifications are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan and give reasons*
- *the local planning authority must (when sending the modified plan to the independent examiner) state whether they believe that the modifications are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan and give reasons. The local planning authority must also submit a copy of the original plan to the independent examiner*
- *the qualifying body must decide whether to proceed with the examination after the examiner has decided whether the modifications proposed change the nature of the plan."*

In accordance with the requirements of the PPG as stated above, this document is therefore setting out the background reason to this modification, sets out what the modification is and will set out the reasons as to why the Town Council considers that these modifications are not so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the Made Plan.

Background

The Made Plan covers the period 2013 – 2031. The designated neighbourhood area covers the same area as the Town Council parished area. On 8 June 2016, MKC ‘made’ the Neighbourhood Plan in June 2016, following a successful referendum. The results showed 85% of those who voted were in favour of the plan.

In March 2019, MKC adopted a new Local Plan (‘Plan:MK’) which replaced the strategic policy framework that informed the Made Plan. Plan:MK has not modified in any significant way that framework as far as Newport Pagnell is concerned.

The Town Council has continued to monitor the effectiveness of the policies of the Made Plan since 2016, through the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Committee – a steering group that took over from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee. In general, the Made Plan has been effective in managing development proposals and a number of its development proposals have been implemented or are in the pipeline. The Implementation Committee has now taken on the role of steering the modifications to Neighbourhood Plan.

However, it has also been mindful of the changing housing land supply position in the MKC area and of how this can lead to significant unplanned development proposals being granted planning permission if the weight of the relevant development plan is weakened. As a result, it has examined how a first review of the Made Plan may engage §14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – essentially to maintain the full weight of its policies for another two years – and how it may use the new modification route created by the 2017 Regulations for this purpose.

In early 2019 the Town Council commenced its review process by carrying out its own assessment of the eight policies and then by engaging an independent professional planning consultant to offer it advice. A number of working group meetings have been held since, with an MKC planning officer in attendance at some, to discuss and agree which policies would benefit from modification.

The Town Council has concluded that it wishes to carry out the review in two ways. Firstly, it wishes to make some relatively minor, but material, modifications to the Made Plan under the new Regulations to lead to a Modified Made Plan by the end of 2020.

Secondly, it intends to carry out a more substantial review of the vision, objectives and spatial strategy of the Modified Made Plan in 2021 to take account of the emerging replacement of Plan:MK by MKC and in the light of other strategic planning initiatives like the Oxford – MK – Cambridge Corridor. It also expects that a more fundamental review of the future successful role of the town centre in the life of the town will be necessary, including proposals for new development. In each case, not enough is known at present to inform and shape that review, hence the two-phased approach.

Draft modifications have been consulted on, as per Regulation 14, and some very minor changes have been made to the submission version of the Modified Plan.

The Proposed Modifications

The Town Council proposes to modify all of the policies of the made Plan as follows:

Policy NP1: Settlement Boundary and New Housing

The policy has been retitled and two (North Crawley Industrial Estate and Mustard Factory) of the six allocated sites are deleted as they have now been implemented. The Tesco site, now renamed the Aston Martin Works site, is nearing completion. The Policy now cross refers to the amalgamated Tickford Fields Farm sites (B & C) as a commitment and retains the references to the Aston Martin Works and Police Station sites. It makes clear the modified overall housing supply position (to take into account completions and commitments and the lower total number of dwellings consented at Tickford Fields) as at January 2020, to ensure that NPPF §14 is engaged by the modified plan. It is considered that, as a result, the modifications are minor and not material.

Policy NP2: Tickford Fields

The policy has been modified to acknowledge that the North Crawley Industrial Estate (Tickford Fields Farm Strategic Reserve Site (A) has been completed. On the remaining parts of the Tickford Fields Farm Site (B & C) the s106 agreement has been negotiated and agreed between all parties including the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, resulting in a planning application submitted in January 2020 but not yet determined which has reduced the total number of dwellings to 930 from 1,200 to take account of the recommendations of the detailed flood risk assessment. A revised concept plan has been added to reflect the consented land use distribution on the site (notably the change to the new school location). It is considered that, as a result, the modifications are minor and not material.

Policy NP3: Former Aston Martin Works Site Specific Policy

The policy has been retitled to replace the reference to 'Tesco' as it is no longer relevant. Tesco sold the site on, so the original name of the site has been used instead. All but the contents of its clauses A and B are deleted and those clauses have been amalgamated and retained to acknowledge the continued importance of conserving the historical buildings on the site (now identified as Local Heritage Assets in the new Newport Pagnell Design Study and by Policy NP4). Although the housing on this site has been completed since January 2020 there has been as yet no action taken to refurbish the buildings as required by the policy. It is considered that, as a result, the modifications are minor and not material.

Policy NP4: Design Guidance

The policy has been retitled and its content restructured and supplemented into five clauses. This has been made possible by the Newport Pagnell Design Study of 2020, which is published separately in the evidence base. The extent to which each clause is relevant to a proposal will be determined by a combination of the nature of the proposal and its location in the town.

Clause A is the original content but with an additional reference to make it clearer that the subdivision of plots using rear or side gardens will not be supported as this will change the character of the local area, as evidenced by the Study. Clause B requires proposals located within the Conservation Area and its setting to have regard to the contents of the 2010 Newport Pagnell Conservation Area Review and the 2020 Newport Pagnell Design Study, as relevant to the proposal context.

Clause C relates to design guidance for the rest of the town and requires proposals to have regard to the contents of the 2020 Newport Pagnell Design Study as relevant to the proposal context. The Study defines a number of residential character areas for this purpose.

Clause D relates to Local Heritage Assets in the Conservation Area and elsewhere in the town and requires proposals to have regard to the contents of the 2020 Newport Pagnell Design Study, as relevant to the proposal context. The Study identifies and describes the local interest of each Local Heritage Asset. Finally, Clause E encourages proposals to create a new accredited museum/heritage/education centre in the town.

All of these modifications are intended to improve the effectiveness and clarity of the policy in its scope and implementation in the future. They are considered material in the sense that they 'unpack' the previous generic policy wording to apply more specifically to different parts of the town (benefiting from the addition of the 2020 Newport Pagnell Design Study to the evidence base to complement the 2010 Conservation Area Review). It is considered that, as a result, the modifications are material, but they do not significantly or substantially change the nature of the plan, either on their own or in combination.

Policy NP5: Affordable Housing and Tenure

The policy text has been modified to bring it into line with Plan:MK, which was adopted as the Local Plan for the area after the making of the Neighbourhood Plan (i.e. at least 31% requirement and with a tenure mix to match its approach), and with the National Planning Policy Framework (i.e. on sites of 11 or more homes).

In addition, the requirement of the original text to require, by exception, the delivery of shared ownership homes equating to 10% of the Tickford Fields scheme as agreed with MKC, has been rephrased in the modified plan this to make it easier to understand. It is considered that, as a result, the modifications are minor and not material.

Policy NP6: Cycle & Pedestrian Routes

The defined network of routes (as shown on the map in Appendix III of the Made Plan) must now be considered in relation to the evidence provided by MKC which has updated this. In addition, some minor changes to the text have been made to aid clarity, including adding a reference to connecting routes with schools and sports facilities and the intention to create a local cycle track facility. It is considered that, as a result, the modifications are material, but they do not significantly or substantially change the nature of the plan, either on their own or in combination.

Policy NP7: Developer Contributions

The policy text has been modified to clarify the meaning of 'major development' and to ensure that the policy also covers phased schemes of smaller developments that may otherwise unfairly circumvent its requirements. It is considered that, as a result, the modifications are minor and not material.

Policy NP8: Linear Park including Leisure

The policy has been retitled and some minor modifications have been made to extend the Linear Park in the town, defined by the adopted Plan:MK, to cover a wider area south of the river. This will ensure the park has even greater recreational value for the local community and its nature conservation and flood control functions are properly recognised. It is considered that, as a result, the modifications are minor and not material.

In addition, a new Policies Map and Insets have been added to consolidate information shown on separate plans throughout the Made Plan in one place.

Overview

There are no new development site allocations proposed and there are no proposals that will lead to a different spatial strategy for the further growth of the town. The modified policies are focused on improving clarity and implementation of the made policies. The opportunity has also been taken to bring the policies into line with the new Plan:MK to ensure they are consistent and remain up to date to aid their successful implementation.

This has been especially needed in respect of Policy NP4 on design matters as the original version was imprecise and added no effective value to the generic design policies of the Local Plan. In order to be more precise and add more value, the Town Council commissioned a Newport Pagnell Design Study for its evidence base, incorporating a review of the Conservation Area Review of 2010 and an appraisal of the character of the rest of the town.

The modified policy cross refers to the 2010 Review, which remains valid, and the 2020 Design Study, so that both will operate as design guidance to inform and determine planning applications as appropriate (as per NPPF §126). The Town Council will encourage MKC to adopt the Design Study as supplementary planning guidance once the Modified Plan is made, but it is not essential for the refinement and application of Plan:MK policies D1-D3 to proposals in Newport Pagnell in the future.

The Made Plan made provision for a quantum of new housing development in excess of the expectations of the, then, emerging Plan:MK. MKC therefore considers that because the Modified Plan retains those site allocations in the original Policy NP1 that have not yet been implemented, the Modified Plan will engage NPPF §14. On MKC's advice, Policy NP1 has been modified to set out the housing supply provisions as of January 2020 in respect of completions, commitments and allocations. The revised housing supply total of 1,163 dwellings reflects the loss of 270 dwellings from the original Tickford Fields allocation (as a result of its flood risk assessment at the planning application stage) but is still in excess of what would have been its reasonable contribution to MKC's objectively assessed housing need.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

MKC has screened the modification proposals to determine if a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) will be necessary under EU Directive 2001/42 and the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004. It has concluded that the modifications do not have the potential for significant environmental effects and an SEA will not be necessary. It consulted with the statutory bodies on its draft opinion and they have confirmed their agreement.

Conclusion

In summary, the draft modification proposals are to modify all of the eight made policies, to one extent or another. The modifications are intended to ensure the continued deliverability of the plan and to improve its clarity for more effective implementation. The modifications remain entirely consistent with the vision and objectives of the Made Plan and are not therefore so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the Made Plan.