

CASTLETHORPE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015-2030

SUBMISSION PLAN v2.13

**A Report to Milton Keynes Council of the Examination
into the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Development Plan**

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Argyle Planning Consultancy LTD
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Summary and Overall Recommendation

0.1 Following my examination of the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan (CNP), including a site visit to the Neighbourhood Area on 15 June 2016, it is my view that the CNP reflects the views of the community and sets out a clear vision and suite of policies and proposals for the Neighbourhood Area.

0.2 However my report highlights a number of areas where I consider the wording of the plan as submitted is not wholly in accordance with one or more of the Basic Conditions.

0.3 I have therefore recommended a number of modifications to the Plan which should be made before the plan can proceed to Referendum. These are intended to ensure that first and foremost the Plan can meet the Basic Conditions.

0.4 In proposing the modifications I have tried to ensure that the integrity and value of the CNP and its vision is retained and that the intention of neighbourhood planning, where the community's wishes should be central to the plan, is honoured. However regarding my recommendation in respect of policy 5 on Local Green Spaces the Parish Council's aspiration cannot be respected if the policy is to meet the Basic Conditions and I recommend that two of the Local Green Spaces are deleted.

0.5 By its nature the examination has to be rigorous. Any criticism is not at all to undermine the significant community effort that has gone into the plan. Rather the purpose of the examination is to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan is as robust as possible and that it can play its part in planning decisions and managing change in the future in an effective way.

0.6 In addition to the recommended modifications it should also be noted that there may be a number of consequential changes to the text and referencing that will be needed as a result of making the modifications. It will also be necessary to ensure all document referencing is up to date. I have not highlighted all such changes, but these are matters that will need remedying in the final version of the Plan.

0.7 Subject to the recommended modifications in the report being completed I am satisfied that:

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;
- the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- the making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority.
- the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.
- prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the plan.

0.8 The CNP also complies with the legal requirements set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

0.9 With the modifications in place the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan will meet the Basic Conditions and can proceed to a Referendum.

0.10 When that takes place I also recommend that the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Area which is synonymous with the Parish administrative boundary is taken as the area for the Referendum.

Peter Biggers
30 July 2016
Argyle Planning Consultancy Ltd

1. Introduction

1.1 Background Context

1.1.1 This Report provides the findings of the Examination into the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan (referred to as the CNP throughout this report).

1.1.2 The CNP was produced by the Castlethorpe Parish Council (CPC) in consultation with interested parties and local stakeholders.

1.1.3 The Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Area equates to the administrative area of the Parish.

1.1.4 The village of Castlethorpe has a population of around 1,100 near Milton Keynes, about three miles north of Stony Stratford and seven miles north of Milton Keynes City Centre. The village itself dates from the Norman Conquest with the site of its motte and bailey castle and the church now forming the heart of the Castlethorpe Conservation Area. Castlethorpe is now mainly a commuter village with people working in Milton Keynes and beyond but agriculture remains important in the local farms and two farms have diversified into small scale business parks. The village has retained its rural character and local facilities such as church, shop and post office, primary school, pre-school and village hall.

1.1.5 This Examiner's Report provides a recommendation as to whether or not the CNP should go forward to a Referendum. Were it to go to Referendum and achieve more than 50% of votes cast in favour of it, then the CNP would be '**made**' by Milton Keynes Council. The CNP would then be used to determine planning applications and guide planning decisions in the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Area.

1.2 Appointment of the Independent Examiner

1.2.1 I was appointed by Milton Keynes Council, with the consent of CPC, to conduct the examination and provide this Report as an Independent Examiner. I am independent of the qualifying body and the Local Authority. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the CNP nor do I have any professional commissions in the area currently and I possess appropriate qualifications and experience. I have planning and development experience, gained over 35 years across the public and private planning sectors and am a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and a member of the National Panel of Independent Examiners Referral Service run by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

1.3 Role of the Independent Examiner

1.3.1 It is the role of the Independent Examiner to consider whether a neighbourhood plan meets the "Basic Conditions." The Basic Conditions are set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA) as applied to

neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA). They are that* :

1. Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;
2. The making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
3. The making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority.
4. The making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.
5. Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the plan.

1.3.2 Pursuant to Basic Condition 5 above, Regulation 32 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) prescribes the following basic condition for the purpose of paragraph 8(2)(g) of Schedule 4B to the TCPA:

The making of the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European Site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European Offshore Marine Site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007) either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

1.3.3 In examining the Plan, I have also considered whether the legislative requirements are met namely:

- The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body as defined in Section 61F of the TCPA as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the PCPA.
- The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the TCPA as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the PCPA.
- The Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the PCPA (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provisions relating to 'excluded development', and must not relate to more than one Neighbourhood Area) and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated Neighbourhood Area in line with the requirements of the PCPA Section 38A.

** NB Two other matters relating to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings and conservation areas are also included in the basic conditions but as these only concern neighbourhood development orders and not neighbourhood plans they are not included in this report*

1.3.4 I have examined the CNP against the Basic Conditions and legislative requirements above and, as Independent Examiner, I must make one of the following recommendations:

- a) that the Plan should proceed to Referendum, on the basis that it meets all legal requirements;
- b) that the Plan once modified to meet all relevant legal requirements should proceed to Referendum;
- c) that the Plan does not proceed to Referendum, on the basis that it does not meet the relevant legal requirements.

1.3.5 If recommending that the Plan should go forward to Referendum, I am also then required to consider whether or not the Referendum Area should extend beyond the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Area to which the Plan relates. I make my recommendation on the Referendum Area at the end of this Report.

1.3.6 The role of the independent examiner is not expressly to comment on whether the plan is sound or how the plan could be improved but rather to focus on the compliance with the Basic Conditions.

2. The Examination Process

2.1 It is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held without a public hearing ie by written representations only. However, according to the legislation, when the Examiner considers it necessary to ensure adequate examination of an issue, or to ensure a person has a fair chance to put a case, a public hearing may be held.

2.2 With regard to the above and on consideration of all the evidence before me, I am satisfied that there is no need for a hearing in respect of the CNP and I confirm that *all* representations on the Neighbourhood Plan received at the Regulation 16 stage have been taken into account in undertaking this examination.

2.3 I held a briefing meeting on matters of fact only with Milton Keynes Council and Castlethorpe Parish Council representatives and undertook an unaccompanied site visit around the Parish on 15 June 2016.

I am grateful to both Councils for facilitating this.

2.4 In undertaking this examination, I have considered each of the following documents in addition to the Submission Version of the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan dated February 2016:

1. National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) (2012)
2. The National Planning Practice Guidance
3. Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
4. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)
5. The Localism Act (2011)

6. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012) (as amended)
7. Milton Keynes Local Plan 2005
8. Milton Keynes Core Strategy 2013
9. Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement Feb 2016
10. Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan Statement of Consultation Feb 2016
11. Castlethorpe Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report Jan 2016
12. Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Area Map and Designation Application Statement
13. Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base Documents

Also:

14. Representations received during the Regulation 16 publicity period post submission ending 13 April 2016

3. Public Consultation

3.1 Background

3.1.1 An accessible and comprehensive approach to public consultation is the best way to ensure that a neighbourhood plan reflects the needs, views and priorities of the local community.

3.1.2 CPC submitted a Consultation Statement, as required by regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, to Milton Keynes Council in February 2016. This document sets out who was consulted and how, together with a brief outline on the outcome of the consultation and what action was taken in response to representations received.

3.1.3 Although the idea of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan had been raised with the Castlethorpe community in 2012, at that stage CPC felt that it wished to first investigate the possibility and build councillors' skills in neighbourhood planning before embarking on the process. Public consultation on the CNP proper therefore commenced in earnest with initial consultation in Spring and Autumn 2014. This was followed by various consultation stages, including the formal pre-submission consultation stage as required by Reg 14 and culminating in the formal, publicity stage, as required by Reg 16, the six week consultation period post submission of the plan from 2 March 2016 to 13 April 2016 which resulted in 4 consultation responses. These are considered as necessary within my assessment of the plan in section 6 below.

3.2 Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan Consultation

3.2.1 The CNP Steering Group has carried out consultation with the community and stakeholders throughout the process of plan preparation. The communication methods used involved articles in the quarterly 'Castlethorpe News' which is delivered to every house in the parish, press releases, website, and targeted mail drops to businesses, landowners, farmers etc. Documents were also deposited at the village shop.

3.2.2 The initial consultation stage of the plan sounding out the parish on issues and initial ideas started in spring 2014 with three 'Have Your Say' sessions followed with a comprehensive village survey in autumn 2014 with 139 completed returns out of 470 questionnaires distributed (almost a 30% response rate). A visioning workshop was then carried out in December 2014 prior to starting preparation of the Plan.

3.2.3 The Consultation Statement sets out both the detail of these early consultations and the comments and survey results that were obtained giving a reasonable basis for the preparation of the plan.

3.2.4 The pre-submission consultation as required by Regulation 14 involved a 6 week period from 8 September 2015 to 20 October 2015. The CNP was made available online with paper copies lodged with the Clerk and at the village shop. The consultation involved coverage in the 'Castlethorpe News', on the village website, on the Facebook page and a letter / email drop to all businesses and landowners in the area and to all statutory consultees. CPC did not carry out specific events at this stage to enable residents to discuss the plan but their view is that there was a good level of awareness in what is anyway a small community. During the period 6 submissions were made in writing.

3.2.5 As a result of CPC's assessment of the representations received the Council decided that it wanted to introduce two additional policies and an allocated site at Maltings Field. As these were significant amendments over the plan as it had been presented for consultation CPC rightly decided that there should be a second pre-submission consultation.

3.2.6 This took place between 7 December 2015 to 1 February 2016 with the same range of consultation publicity as for the first round. 6 representations were again received including an alternative proposed site for allocation. CPC again considered the representations including a comparative assessment of the 2 housing site proposals before resolving to submit the plan to the MKC with the smaller Maltings Field site as the proposed allocation.

3.2.7 The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations are part and parcel of the 1st Basic Condition and regulation 15 (2) sets out clearly what the consultation statement should include. Having reviewed the consultation statement I am satisfied that the statement and its appendices are compliant with Reg 15 in demonstrating who was consulted, how they were consulted, what the main issues and concerns were and what action has been taken in response to these to arrive at the submission draft plan. The level of representation and response to the pre-submission plan was extremely low. However I am satisfied that with the communication that took place and the fact that residents had two opportunities to comment on the pre submission plan with appropriate publicity demonstrates that enough was done to seek the community's participation.

4. Preparation of the Plan and Legislative Requirements

In terms of the procedural tests set out in paragraph 1.3.3 of this report my findings are as follows:

4.1 Qualifying body

4.1.1 CPC is the duly elected lower tier council and is the appropriate qualifying body to prepare a neighbourhood plan for Castlethorpe.

4.1.2 I am satisfied that the requirements set out in the Localism Act (2011) and in Section 61F(5) of the TCPA (as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the PCPA) and in regulations 8, 9 and 10 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 have been met. The Parish Council is therefore the *qualifying body* for leading the CNP.

4.2 Plan area

4.2.1 The Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Area as designated coincides with the Parish boundary.

4.2.2 An application was made by the CPC on 21 February 2013 to designate the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Area. This was approved by Milton Keynes Council on 28 May 2013 following consultation and the Neighbourhood Area was designated.

4.2.3 This satisfied the requirement in line with the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan under section 61G (1) of the TCPA (as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the PCPA) and regulations 5, 6 and 7 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

4.3 Plan period

4.3.1 A neighbourhood plan must specify the period during which it is to have effect. The CNP clearly states on its title page and in the introductory sections that it covers the period 2015 to 2030 which broadly coincides with the Milton Keynes Core Strategy. This satisfies the requirements of Section 38B of the PCPA as amended

4.4 Excluded development

4.4.1 The Plan does not include policies or proposals that relate to any of the categories of excluded development – county matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or any matters set out in Section 61K of the TCPA 1990. The CNP relates solely to the neighbourhood area and no other neighbourhood and there are no other neighbourhood development plans in place within the Parish. This satisfies requirements of Section 38B of the PCPA as amended.

4.5 Development and use of land

4.5.1 The Neighbourhood Plan should only contain policies relating to development and use of land. Subject to the modifications proposed below in section 6, the CNP policies would be compliant with this requirement of Section 38B of the PCPA as amended and all relate to development and the use of land. Some community proposals are set out at section 5 of the plan and I deal with this issue in section 6 below.

4.6 Plan Publication Following Submission

4.6.1 Milton Keynes Council undertook a final validation check of the CNP on submission in February 2016 and was satisfied that the Plan could proceed to be publicised under Regulation 16 and proceed to this independent examination.

5. The Basic Conditions

5.1 National policy and advice

5.1.1 The main document that sets out national policy is the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the NPPF) published in 2012. In particular it explains that the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development will mean that neighbourhood plans should support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans and plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan.

5.1.2 The NPPF also makes it clear that neighbourhood plans should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. In other words neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan. They cannot promote less development than that set out in the Development Plan or undermine its strategic policies.

5.1.3 The NPPF indicates that plans should provide a framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency.

5.1.4 National advice on planning is set out in the *Planning Practice Guidance* (PPG) which includes specific advice regarding neighbourhood plans.

5.1.5 I consider the extent to which the plan meets this Basic Condition No 1 in section 6 below.

5.2 Sustainable development

5.2.1 A qualifying body must demonstrate how a neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF as a whole constitutes the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice for planning. The NPPF explains that there are three dimensions to sustainable development:-

economic, social and environmental.

5.2.2 There is no legal requirement for a formal sustainability appraisal to be carried out in respect of neighbourhood plans and one has not been carried out in this case. Instead a simple assessment of the sustainability of CNP policies was carried out as part of the Basic Conditions Statement. The findings of this simple assessment were that the policies with the exception of Policy 6 had no likely negative impacts on economic, social or environmental objectives and no need for mitigating changes. I consider the specific matter of Policy 6 below in Section 6.

5.2.3 In general I am satisfied that this assessment process in conjunction with screening opinions for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment carried out by Milton Keynes Council (see below) does support a conclusion that overall the CNP will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. However, I consider detailed points regarding the plan's ability to meet Basic Condition No 2 in section 6 below.

5.3 Conformity with the Development Plan

5.3.1 The adopted development plan in force for Milton Keynes remains the Milton Keynes Core Strategy (MKCS) augmented by saved policies of the Milton Keynes local Plan (MKLP) such as are still relevant. Therefore in terms of assessing the plan against Basic Condition No 3 it is the MKCS that must be used. However this is itself under review.

5.3.2 The PPG explains that neighbourhood plans can be developed before or at the same time as the Local Planning Authority is producing its local plan. Plan : MK which will replace the MKCS is progressing but is at this stage still at the preferred options stage and not expected to reach submission till Spring 2018.

5.3.3 It is however a requirement of the NPPF that plans are based on sound current reasoning and evidence and I will therefore be considering as part of my assessment against Basic Condition No 1 the extent to which the CNP has taken account of the most recent evidence available which will include the evidence base for Plan : MK.

5.3.4 Milton Keynes Council has confirmed that it has no concerns over the general conformity of the CNP with the strategic policies of the MKCS. I consider in further detail in Section 6 below the matter of general conformity with the plan.

5.4 European Union (EU) Obligations

5.4.1 A neighbourhood plan must be compatible with European Union (EU) obligations, as incorporated into UK law, in order to be legally compliant.

Strategic Environment Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment

5.4.2 Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment has a bearing on neighbourhood plans. This Directive is often referred to as the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) Directive. Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (often referred to as the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives respectively) aim to protect and improve Europe's most important habitats and species and can have a bearing on neighbourhood plans.

5.4.3 Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning regulations as amended in 2015 requires either that an Environmental Assessment is submitted with a Neighbourhood Plan proposal or a determination from the responsible authority (MKC) that the plan is not likely to have 'significant effects'

5.4.4 As stated above a screening opinion both in respect of the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) was prepared by MKC in consultation with the statutory bodies. These determined that there would be no need to carry out either assessment.

5.4.5 The test in the additional Basic Condition is that the making of the neighbourhood development plan is "*not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.*" Given the nature and content of the Neighbourhood Plan, the limited scale of development it promotes and the distance from any European site the screening opinion determined it unlikely that there would be any direct significant effect. Any in-combination effects with other strategic site allocations such as those in Milton Keynes itself would already be covered by mitigation measures established for these areas.

5.5 Other EU obligations

European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

5.5.1 The Human Rights Act encapsulates the Convention and its articles into UK Law.

5.5.2 In respect of Article 1 of the first protocol - the right of everyone to the peaceful enjoyment of possessions; although the CNP includes policies that would restrict development rights, this does not have a greater impact than the general restrictions on development rights provided for in national law. The restriction of development rights inherent in the UK's statutory planning system is demonstrably in the public interest by ensuring that land is used in the most sustainable way, avoiding or mitigating adverse impacts on the environment, community and economy.

5.5.3 In respect of Article 6 of the Convention's Rights and Freedoms - the right to a fair and public hearing in determination of an individual's rights and obligations - the process

for preparing the CNP is fully compatible with this Article, allowing for consultation on its proposals at various stages, and incorporating this independent examination process.

5.5.4 In respect of Article 14 of the Conventions Rights and Freedoms - the enjoyment of rights and freedoms without discrimination on any ground, the policies and proposals of the CNP have been developed in consultation with the community and wider stakeholders to produce as inclusive a document as possible. Although no specific Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out I am satisfied that, across the plan as a whole, no sectors of the community are likely to be discriminated against and no objections have been raised that would suggest otherwise. The policies together would generally have public benefits and encourage the social sustainability of the neighbourhood.

5.5.5. I am satisfied therefore that the Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, the ECHR.

5.5.6 I am not aware of any other European Directives which apply to this particular Neighbourhood Plan and no representations at pre or post-submission stage have drawn any others to my attention. Taking all of the above into account, I am satisfied that the CNP is compatible with EU obligations and therefore with Basic Conditions Nos 4 and 5.

6. The Neighbourhood Plan – Assessment

The Neighbourhood Plan is considered against the Basic Conditions in this section of my Report following the structure and headings in the Plan. Given my findings in section 5 above that the plan as a whole is compliant with Basic Conditions Nos 4 (EU obligations) and 5 (Other prescribed conditions), this section largely focusses on Basic Conditions No 1 (Having regard to National Policy), No 2 (Contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development) and No 3 (General Conformity with strategic policies of the Development Plan).

Where modifications are recommended, they are presented and clearly marked as such and highlighted in bold print, with any proposed new wording in italics.

6.0 The General Form of the Plan

6.0.1 The structure of the CNP is generally logical and clear with sections distinguishing between the policies themselves, and their justification. Each policy is accompanied by some supporting text and I suggest in the topic sections below where a greater degree of justification is required.

6.0.2 My main concern with the structure is in respect of the Implementation Section at 5. It is unclear from this that the community social and physical infrastructure projects which CPC wishes to achieve do not form part of the neighbourhood plan. Thus there is tension with the legal requirement on neighbourhood plans that they deal with development and the use of land only. To resolve this I suggest that Section 5 is restructured and a new Section 6. Entitled 'Community Projects' is created.

Recommendation 1

1A – Move paragraph 5.10 up to follow 5.3 and reword as follows:

“5.4 Implementation of some of the Plan policies will require some planning obligations to be entered intoin order to make the scheme satisfactory in line with paragraphs 173 and 203-205 of the National Planning Policy Framework.”

1B Insert new section 6 incorporating the remaining parts of the current section 5 entitled 'Community Projects' and with the following introductory paragraph:

“In approaching the issues which the community identified as important it was evident early on that achieving answers to some of them through the policies and proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan would not be possible. The Parish Council therefore has identified a number of community proposals which it will seek to achieve alongside the statutory neighbourhood plan.”

6.1 Assets of Community Value.....

6.2 Salvage of Materials and Street Furniture.....

6.3 Infrastructure Projects.....

6.0.3 The idea of a Policies Map is essential for the operation of the policies and I support

its inclusion. However as currently presented it has a number of shortcomings which need to be corrected as follows:

- The inset for the village itself is too small and needs to be enlarged.
- The colour coding for policies 2 and 4 is too close to allow it to be interpreted
- Policy 1 boundary is not shown or because of the colour does not register
- Policy 6 colour does not register
- Policy 3 is not shaded to differentiate the character areas.

6.04 The NPPF indicates that plans should provide a practical basis within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency and to comply with Basic Condition No 1 and advice that plans should be clear and unambiguous I recommend that the Policies Map is revised as follows:

Recommendation 2– Make the following modifications to the Policies Map:

- **Split the Policies map as follows:**
- **Main map showing Plan Area and location of the village inset plus Balney Grounds and Lodge Farm plus Policies 8 and 9.**
 - **With Policy 9 show this as a pale coloured shading outside the Castlethorpe inset area.**
 - **Ensure the key has both the policy number and what it is showing eg Policy 8 - Cosgrove Leisure Park Access**
 - *(See also Recommendation 11B regarding the extent and notation for Balney Grounds and Lodge Farm).*
- **Prepare an enlarged Castlethorpe village inset on a separate sheet so that it can be read at full A4 size.**
 - **Ensure that where there is a spatial dimension to any policy it is mapped including the settlement boundary at Policy 1 and the separate character areas at Policy 3 as these are needed to operate the policies.**
 - **Apply a Policy 9 shading to the area outside the settlement boundary to the edge of the inset box in the same way as on the Main Policies Map**
 - **Add the Castlethorpe Conservation Area boundary to the Castlethorpe inset.**
 - **Change the colour coding so that notations show up well and there is no ambiguity as to which area is involved.**
 - **Ensure the key has both the policy number and what it is showing eg Policy 1 – Castlethorpe development boundary**

6.0.5 With these modifications in place the general form of the plan and its Policies Map will comply with the Basic Conditions.

6.0.6 There are a number of references including on the title and contents page and on page 6 to the document being the pre-submission draft Neighbourhood Plan when in fact

it should be the Submission Draft. As there will be a final version of the plan published for the referendum I simply draw your attention to the fact that the terminology and version of the plan needs to be correctly expressed at that point.

6.1 - Introduction and Background

6.1.1 The first section of the CNP is largely factual setting out the contextual information about the neighbourhood planning process, the historical and social context of the village and the planning policy context within which the plan must sit. There are 4 issues however that need to be clarified in the context of Basic Condition No 1.

6.1.2 First, paragraph 1.4 on page 6 appears to paraphrase the basic conditions but uses different terminology. The basic conditions should be expressed in the same terms as the legislation to avoid confusion. Similarly, at paragraph 1.18, the same wording should be used when referring to the relationship between the plan and the NPPF.

6.1.3 Secondly, the referencing to strategic policies of the Milton Keynes Local Plan in paragraph 1.21 is incorrect. Only Policy S10 of the named strategic policies is not superseded by the Milton Keynes Core Strategy 2013.

6.1.4 Thirdly in respect of paragraph 1.23 the NPPF and PPG requires neighbourhood plans to consider the evidence base of emerging plans. Thus the reference in paragraph 1.23 that the plan may look to some of the evidence informing Plan:MK is insufficiently clear.

6.1.5 Fourthly at paragraph 1.24 what are expressed as the objectives of designation of a conservation area are incorrect. The statutory test in respect of Conservation Areas is that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. To accord with Basic Condition No 1 this should be reflected in the wording at paragraph 1.24.

To resolve these issues I recommend the following modifications:

Recommendation 3

3A – Replace the bullet points at paragraph 1.4 with the following:

- ***having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan.***
- ***the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.***
- ***the making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority.***
- ***the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise***

compatible with, EU obligations.

- *the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.*

3B – Revise Paragraph 1.20 bullets to remove Policy S1 and S9 these are not saved. Revise paragraph 1.21 to read

“ All of the strategic policies of the Local Plan other than S10 above have been superseded by the adopted 2013 Core Strategy.....”

3C - Amend paragraph 1.23 3rd sentence to read:

“The Parish Council has looked to the evidence informing the emerging Plan:MK in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan”

3D – Amend paragraph 1.24 second sentence to read

“Designation of a conservation area carries with it the responsibility to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

1.25.....”

With these modifications the plan will comply with the basic conditions.

6.2 Community Views

6.2.1 The second section of the plan sets out the community’s views as demonstrated through the survey carried out in Autumn 2014. I have no comments to make on what is supportive factual material other than to correct one error at 2.3 which is misleading in the context of what the plan then goes on to propose.

6.2.2 At the 11th bullet point it is reported that “ a large majority of the respondents was hostile to building inside the settlement boundary” . However it is clear from the survey results in the Consultation Statement that this view does not relate to all development. Rather it related to commercial development within the settlement boundary and that needs to be corrected as otherwise there is a direct contradiction with policy 1 of the plan.

Recommendation 4 - Reword the 11th bullet point at paragraph 2.3 to read

“A large majority of residents was hostile to commercial development within the settlement boundary.”

6.3 Vision and Objectives

6.3.1 Section 3 sets out the vision and objectives of the plan which contributes to providing a clear thread between the issues identified and the policies and proposals of the plan

6.3.2 There is simply a need for one reference in the vision at paragraph 5 to be corrected. The vision here is referring to designation of green space under the powers conferred in paragraph 76 of the NPPF but the text merely refers to green spaces when in fact it should refer to Local Green Spaces which carries the special protection.

**Recommendation 5 – Reword line 5 of paragraph 5 in the vision to read :
“...Local Green Spaces for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.”**

6.4 Land Use Policies

6.4.1 Section 4 of the CNP presents the policies of the plan and begins with an introduction to the policies.

6.4.2 The Planning Practice Guidance is clear that “*neighbourhood planning provides the opportunity for communities to set out a positive vision for how they want their community to develop... in ways that meet identified local need and make sense for local people*”. In that spirit paragraph 4.6 sets the wrong tone for the plan and should be reworded to accord with Basic Condition No 1. The statement that the purpose of policies is in part to discourage applications for development that the local community does not want to happen is unnecessarily negative. There is a similar statement at paragraph 1.2 of the plan but there it is more positively expressed. To accord with the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the NPPF I propose that this paragraph is modified.

Recommendation 6 - Replace the wording of the first sentence of Paragraph 4.6 to read:

“ The purpose of these policies is to shape and direct future change within Castlethorpe. Policies must be clearly written.....”

6.4.3 As a general comment in respect of section 4 it would help the understanding of this major section of the plan if each policy section was given a heading and a reference number rather than simply numbering the paragraphs throughout. Without this there is a lack of clarity about which text relates to which policy and therefore the requirement of the PPG for clarity is not met.

Recommendation 7 – Number the text up to Policy 1 as 4.0.1, 4.0.2 etc. Then Number The policy 1 section 4.1 and name it Settlement Boundary. Number the policy 2 section as 4.2 and name it Housing Development at Maltings Field etc

6.4.4 With these modifications in place Basic Condition No 1 will be satisfied in terms of the plan being positively expressed, clear and unambiguous.

Policy 1 – Castlethorpe Development Boundary

6.4.5 Policy 1 seeks to establish a settlement boundary for Castlethorpe that is in accordance with the NPPF and Development Plan policy. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF seeks to promote sustainable development in rural areas and the CNP in defining where the development boundary is located allows that objective to be met.

6.4.6 Policy CS1 of the MKCS and the related table 5.1 and figure 5.1 identifies

Castlethorpe as an 'Other Village with a development boundary' where small scale development through sensitive infill is appropriate. Outside of these areas saved policy S10 of the MKLP restricts development to that which is appropriate in the countryside. It is entirely appropriate therefore that the CNP identifies the development boundary. The boundary principally follows that as defined in 2013 but the opportunity to review the development boundary has been taken in recognition of the exceedingly limited infill opportunities within that boundary. This is a reasonable approach and is in general conformity with the strategy for the rural area of the district set out in policy CS9 of the MKCS.

6.4.7 The content of the policy conforms to the development plan and establishes a sustainable basis to development in the parish.

6.4.8 As such Policy 1 meets Basic Conditions Nos 1, 2 and 3 and no alteration to the policy is necessary.

Policy 2 Land at Maltings Field

6.4.9 Policy 2 identifies a small area for housing development beyond the existing development but broadly within the settlement structure. This proposal was introduced late in the process which triggered a second pre-submission consultation. Whilst I have no concern procedurally in terms of the basic conditions as it appears to have been taken through an appropriate consultation process I do not consider that the justification for the allocation and the reason as to why this site was chosen is adequately set out in the plan. The PPG requires proportionate, robust evidence to support the choices made and the approach taken. The evidence should be drawn upon to explain succinctly the intention and rationale of the policies in the draft neighbourhood plan. In addition, the scale of intended development exceeds small scale infilling as allowed for in the development plan and the rationale for releasing the site needs to be established. In this context the supporting text to the policy does not meet Basic Conditions Nos 1 and 3.

6.4.10 I understand that the context is a seriously limited opportunity for any development within the plan development boundary and a wish to see an increased opportunity for housing within the village but this should be stated upfront as the justification for the policy together with a statement about the sustainability of the proposal.

6.4.11 The policy seeks to enable a choice of homes including smaller starter homes which has regard to the policy objectives of the NPPF. However in addition to the concern regarding the supporting text I have two concerns with the potential operation of the policy itself.

6.4.12 First, the NPPF indicates that plans should provide a practical basis within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency and the PPG requires that policies in a neighbourhood plan should be clear and

unambiguous. They should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Against these tests clause v of Policy 2 fails. The matters that the clause requires a financial contribution for do not form a specific part of the CNP by the Parish Council's own admission. Moreover it is insufficiently clear what an 'appropriate financial contribution' would be or what exactly a developer would be contributing to. In the absence of clear agreement as to what is necessary, appropriate and relevant the reference in the policy needs to be more flexible. Moreover the supporting text also needs to be adjusted.

6.4.13 Secondly, the policy includes a requirement for an appropriate noise and visual buffer to the railway but the policy was the subject of a representation at the Reg 16 stage from Network Rail drawing attention to the fact that development within 10 metres of an operational railway is required to be informed by consultation with Network Rail. It is possible that the developed area would fall outside this distance but in order to comply with requirements I recommend that a modification is made to clause iii of the policy requiring consultation.

Recommendation 8

8A – Insert at the start of paragraph 4.11 new text setting out the rationale for the proposed release of land and revise paragraph 4.12 to set out the sustainability of the option as follows:

“4.11 A high proportion of the Castlethorpe community identified a need for housing in the village - particularly smaller, low cost housing and housing available to meet the needs of those wishing to downsize from larger family properties. The opportunities to provide this housing within the settlement boundary as originally defined in 2005 and revised in 2013 would be extremely limited and the CNP proposes a modest housing allocation at Maltings Field on the edge.....”

“4.12 The Maltings Field site has been assessed in terms of its sustainability and found to be the more sustainable option of two considered. Development would be largely contained by new housing in Paddock Close and Maltings Field, by the railway and the boundary hedge along Fox Covert Lane. It is well connected by footpaths and within walking distance of the services the village offers and is an appropriately-scaled housing site to meet the housing needs of the local community in the context of Castlethorpe and the settlement hierarchy set out in the MKCS. Given the shortage of smaller houses for starter and downsizer homes within the village it would be expected that two thirds.....”

8B – Delete clause v from the policy and replace with the following :

“Where investment in physical and social infrastructure is shown to be necessary as a result of the development and relevant to it this will be secured through a S106 planning obligation which complies with policy CS21 of the Milton Keynes Core Strategy”.

8C – Adapt the last section of text at paragraph 4.13 to read :

“Finally the policy also requires that development meets the costs of social and physical infrastructure improvements that are directly related to the development and that this will be secured through a S106 planning obligation.”

Delete the rest of the text up to the start of paragraph 4.14.

8D – Amend clause iii of the policy to read :

“The scheme layout is prepared in consultation with Network Rail and provides for.....”

6.4.14 With these modifications in place the proposal and policy would meet Basic Conditions Nos 1, 2 and 3

Policy 3 Design guidance

6.4.15 Policy 3 sets out detailed guidance that development should adhere to, both in Castlethorpe as a whole and in identified character areas which is designed to ensure that local distinctiveness is respected. In this respect the policy has had regard to sections 7 of the NPPF relating to design and to section 12 relating to the historic environment . The policy also conforms with policy CS13 of the MKCS whilst applying its own local detail to the requirements.

6.4.16 The only issue with this policy relates to its deliverability. The operation of the policy depends on the spatial definition of the character areas and yet as discussed above the coloured hatching on the Policies Map does not distinguish between Character Area 1 and 2. As such the CNP is not clear and unambiguous as required in the PPG. In order to meet Basic Condition No 1 the Policies Map must be clarified as set out in Recommendation 2 above.

6.4.17 With this modification in place the CNP meets Basic Conditions Nos 1 and 3. It also will contribute to achieving sustainable development that is appropriate to the character of Castlethorpe.

Policy 4 – Community Facilities

6.4.18 Castlethorpe as a small community has a limited range of community facilities and policy 4 seeks both to protect these and support their improvement and enhancement. In that respect the principle of the policy has regard to the policy advice in paragraphs 28 and 70 of the NPPF and conforms with policy CS17 of the MKCS whilst adding local definition by defining the facilities the plan wishes to protect.

6.4.19 I have only one concern with the policy. Most of the identified community facilities

are either within or have a direct bearing on the Conservation Area where there is a statutory duty to preserve or enhance. Although the policy requires proposals to be appropriate in design terms it only applies the test of harm to residential amenities. To fully accord with Basic Condition No 1 the policy should refer to the conservation area.

Recommendation 9 – Add at the end of the first sentence to policy 4 the words:
“.....and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area”

6.4.20 With this in place the policy would meet Basic Conditions 1 and 3 and would achieve sustainable development by helping to secure social infrastructure.

Policy 5 Local Green Spaces

6.4.21 Policy 5 seeks to take up the power established in the NPPF at paragraphs 76 and 77 to establish and protect Local Green Spaces. The NPPF sets out clear criteria for such spaces and Annex B of the CNP seeks to explain the rationale for the sites that have been identified. I discuss the appropriateness of the identified spaces below but, on a general point, the policy fails to have appropriate regard to the NPPF in rehearsing the circumstances in which such sites could be developed. The intention of the designation is that these Local Green Spaces would carry the highest level of protection akin to the Green Belt and that very special circumstances would need to be in place to justify development. The NPPF does not say anything about development which is minor or relating to recreation or infrastructure being acceptable and the CNP should not rehearse possibilities in this respect.

6.4.22 It is possible that part of the difficulty CPC has is that it wishes to promote development of car parking on part of the village green which is one of the identified spaces and there is therefore a tension between policies 5 and 6. However the solution to this is not to weaken the protection policy 5 seeks to afford to Local Green Spaces. Rather, if the CNP wishes to provide for car parking on part of the village green, the green should be removed from the list of Local Green Spaces.

6.4.23 A late representation in response to the Regulation 16 consultation has been received relating to the proposed designation of Gobbey's Field as a Local Green Space. I have decided to accept the representation as valid, despite the lateness, on the grounds that the owners were unaware of the proposal from earlier consultation stages and I accept the point made in representation that the advice in the PPG is that landowners should be consulted when these proposals are being made. This is not to say that I agree with the respondent's point that the plan has failed to meet legal requirements in terms of publicity and consultation. CPC acted in good faith and reportedly had consulted with agents who they thought represented the Gobbey's Field landowner when in fact this apparently was not the case. I am satisfied that CPC fulfilled its obligations in publicising the plan locally including contacting landowning interests. As they have pointed out, other landowners have involved themselves in the plan as a result of the publicity undertaken

which would suggest that publicity and consultation was adequate. In any event, agreeing that I will consider the representation in my examination means that the owner in this case is not disadvantaged.

6.4.24 The facts in respect of Gobbey's Field appear to be that it is privately owned land leased to an agricultural tenant who uses it for grazing although at the time of my visit there were no animals present. The Definitive Map which is legally conclusive proof of a footpath's existence shows a public right of way - Footpath no 5 traversing the site from the footbridge over the railway in the northernmost corner to the southernmost corner of the field where it meets with a track from Station Road. For the most part the route of the path on the ground is not defined as it just crosses open pasture. There is however a surfaced, lit footpath link in the northern corner of the field linking the railway footbridge to The Chequers. This path is entirely open on its east side allowing access from any point of it onto Gobbey's Field. There are also 2 gated access points from Shepperton Close which, although the respondent argues are not public access points, equally have nothing to prevent the public from climbing over them into the field.

6.4.25 The fact that the land is not in public ownership and not in formal use as public open space would not preclude its designation as Local Green Space. Nor would its use principally for livestock grazing preclude the designation. The issue is whether it meets the criteria in paragraph 77 of the NPPF and whether it is demonstrably special to the local community.

6.4.26 Looking at each of the NPPF criteria in turn:

- First, Gobbey's Field is in close proximity to the community with strong footpath links to the older part of Castlethorpe to the north of the railway via the railway footbridge to which there is open access across the field as well as formal access from the footpath link to The Chequers. It is therefore well related to its surrounding community and in that respect is not dissimilar to Castle Field – also proposed to be designated as Local Green Space.
- With respect to the second test, I acknowledge that the recreational role of Gobbey's Field is not a formal one, in the way the recreation ground is. Annex B of the Plan setting out the Local Green Space Assessment of Sites does not present any evidence for the statement that Gobbey's Field is "*without doubt the most utilised Green Space in the Parish*" and no evidence to substantiate the range of recreation activities reported to take place on it. I have therefore given no weight to these statements. Whilst it is a field which allows formal and informal public access across it for countryside walks, dog walking etc. it is not dissimilar in this respect to many other areas of countryside adjoining villages. I accept that the field provides a tranquil, green backdrop to the southern end of the village with open views south to the River Tove but I am not persuaded that this is any different to other areas of countryside bordering the village.
- Thirdly the area is local to the settlement but it is a large field only the northern section of which is contained by development in The Chequers & Prospect Place.

6.4.27 In terms of the further advice in the PPG regarding Local Green Space designation there is nothing to suggest that such a designation would pre-empt the ability of MKC to provide for sustainable development to meet its objectively assessed housing need. On the other hand the site is already outside the settlement boundary and Castlethorpe is not a village identified as one where significant development would be sustainable. In that respect the starting point for assessing any residential development proposal in the future is that it would not be acceptable. Therefore the need for the community to protect the space from development by designating it as Local Green Space is not justified. Furthermore, the PPG suggests that the designating authority should consider maintenance implications of designation. In this particular case however as there would be no change over the status quo in respect of public access there would be no increased maintenance obligations on the owner simply in terms of designation.

6.4.28 In conclusion therefore in respect of Gobbey's Field I am not satisfied that it has been demonstrated that the field is demonstrably more special to the community than other areas of countryside outside the settlement boundary. The case for designation as Local Green Space in the context of the NPPF and PPG and therefore Basic Condition No 1 has not been sufficiently made and the proposed designation should be removed.

Recommendation 10 –

10A – Revise the last part of the policy to read :

“Proposal for development in a Local Green Space will be resisted unless there are very special circumstances to justify it.”

10B – change the last sentence of paragraph 4.22 to read:

“Once designated the policy will resist all proposals for development other than in very special circumstances”

10C - Remove the village green and Gobbey's Field from the list of Local Green Spaces that the CNP designates in policy 5.

10D Amend the analysis in respect of the Village Green and Gobbey's Field in Annexe B to indicate that whilst these areas were considered they were not designated as it was not felt that their designation would meet the criteria for Local Green Space set out in the NPPF.

6.4.29 With these modifications the policy will meet Basic Condition No 1, would be generally in conformity with the development plan at MKCS Policy CS17 and helps to achieve sustainable development.

Policy 6 Car Parking at the Carrington Arms

6.4.30 Policy 6 seeks to provide for a small amount of car parking in the centre of the village by using part of the village green. As the CNP stands therefore there is a real tension between policy 5 and policy 6 – thus the recommendation above that the village green is removed from the list of Local Green Spaces.

6.4.31 My only concern regarding the operation of the policy is that again it is not clear and unambiguous how the policy will operate because the Policies Map does not clearly show the extent of the proposed area. Thus the policy is in conflict with the PPG and therefore Basic Condition 1. My modifications at Recommendation 2 above to the Policies Map will remedy this lack of clarity by ensuring the Castlethorpe inset is enlarged and the colour coding clarified.

Policy 7 Lodge Farm Business Centre and Balney Grounds

6.4.32 These two sites are established locations where commercial businesses have developed as a diversification to agricultural operation. Lodge Farm Business Park is the more established of the two with a considerable number of units operating at the site.

6.4.33 The principle of the policy in allowing some expansion of the sites would have regard to section 3 of the NPPF and paragraph 30 in particular. However both in respect of the NPPF and saved policy E6 of the MKLP there is a direct conflict.

6.4.34 As it stands Policy 7 refers to the Policies Map and the insets within it for Lodge Farm and Balney Grounds . These identify a development boundary for each site within which Policy 7 indicates that new development and extension will be supported. The difficulty with this is that on both sites these boundaries are drawn very wide particularly at Balney Grounds. In both respects it would be very difficult to resist major development proposals over a wide area of open countryside. I do not believe this was the CPC's intention but in any event if this is allowed to remain as the basis for the operation of the policy it would directly conflict with the Framework, Policy E6 of the MKLP and Policy CS9 of the MKCS which sets out the strategy for the rural area, by enabling significant encroachment of development in open countryside. I accept that clause iii requires development to observe other policies of the development plan but nevertheless the policy is confused and unclear because of the boundaries as drawn.

6.4.35 It would be difficult to define a different boundary at the two sites particularly at Balney Grounds. I therefore recommend that the criteria for the policy is instead developed to avoid a situation where a development proposal would be in direct conflict with national and local planning policy.

Recommendation 11 –

11A Reword criterion i to read :

“they are confined to redevelopment of existing buildings or infilling between existing buildings or the development of new build development immediately adjoining existing buildings.

Add new criterion iii to read :

“In all cases the scale of new buildings should not exceed that of existing buildings

on the site”.

Reword existing criterion iii and renumber as iv to read:

“Their design conforms with other policies of the development plan and in particular policy 9 of the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan

11B Remove the redline boundaries for Balney Grounds and Lodge Farm Business Centre from the policies map and replace with an indicative circle or symbol for policy 7.

6.4.36 With these modifications made the policy can control the scale of future development and its impacts on the open countryside whilst reflecting the encouragement that the NPPF gives to rural enterprise at paragraph 28. The policy would also help to ensure sustainable employment generating development in the rural area. As modified it would therefore meet Basic Conditions Nos 1, 2 and 3.

Policy 8 –Cosgrove Leisure Park Access

6.4.37 The purpose of the policy addresses a specific problem where the use of Fox Covert Lane as a general vehicular access to the Cosgrove Leisure Park would not be appropriate.

6.4.38 In the context of the advice in the PPG that policies should be clear and unambiguous a minor adjustment should be made to policy 8 to clarify that it relates to vehicular access.

Recommendation 12 – Replace the wording in line 4 of the policy as follows:
“....Castlethorpe as a new vehicular access for customers. The.....”

Policy 9 Surrounding Countryside and Landscape

6.4.39 Policy 9 seeks to protect the character of the countryside around Castlethorpe which in itself is consistent with the NPPF and the policies of the Development Plan. However the policy goes further and expressly precludes any renewable energy proposals for onshore wind. This is inappropriate against the NPPF which promotes renewable energy. The statement that all future wind turbines (which by implication includes even small domestic turbines) will be intrusive in the landscape and will adversely affect the setting of heritage assets is unsubstantiated and not evidenced. Greater flexibility must be incorporated into the policy if Basic conditions 1 and 3 are to be met. I suggest that there could still be an appropriate level of control if landscape character and heritage assets are used as criteria for assessment.

Recommendation 13 – Reword the second sentence of the policy as follows:

“Proposals for wind turbines will only be supported where they would not have an adverse impact on the landscape of the Parish and would not adversely affect the significance of the parish’s heritage assets and their settings.”

6.4.40 With this modification the policy would have regard to national and local policy whilst allowing control over inappropriate wind installations and the Basic Conditions would be met.

6.5 Other Minor Corrections

6.5.1 A number of minor corrections should also be made to the plan.

Recommendation 14

- **Annex A Line 1 Delete the word “report” and replace with the word “plan.” The weblink to the evidence base documents in Annex A at the time of writing this report is not working and should be reactivated. Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Development Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion should be included in the table of evidence base documents.**
- **Annex B – All references to Green Spaces should be changed to Local Green Spaces as that is what the assessment is considering. Consequential amendments need to be made to the text in respect of the Village Green and Gobbey’s Field in the light of Recommendation 10.**

7. Referendum

7.1 Subject to the recommended modifications set out above being completed, it is appropriate that the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a Referendum.

7.2 I am required to consider whether the Referendum Area should be synonymous with the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Area or extended beyond it.

7.3 The Neighbourhood Area mirrors the Parish boundary and, whilst I understand that residents over a wider area, may look to Castlethorpe Parish for employment or services I do not consider that this would warrant extending the area.

7.4 Moreover given that the Plan does not propose any major allocations of land that could be considered to have a significant impact on adjoining Parishes I do not consider that residents of those Parishes need to be given the opportunity to vote in the referendum.

7.5 Accordingly, I consider that it is unnecessary to recommend any other referendum area than the Neighbourhood Area and no evidence has been submitted to suggest any alternative approach.

Recommendation 15

I recommend to Milton Keynes Council that the Neighbourhood Plan, modified as

specified above, should proceed to a Referendum based on the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Area as designated by the Council on 28 May 2013.

**Peter D Biggers 30 July 2016
Independent Examiner
Argyle Planning Consultancy Ltd**