



Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan

Consultation on designation of Gobbey's field as a Local Green Space under Policy 5 of the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan

October 2016

Following an independent examination and hearing, Milton Keynes Council has considered the report of the examiner on the Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan. Milton Keynes Council proposes to accept all but one of the Examiner's recommendations.

Under section 13 (1) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Milton Keynes Council proposes to take a different decision to that recommended by the Examiner on one specific policy matter (the designation of Gobbey's Field as Local Green Space) as a result of new evidence provided by the parish council in support of the value that the local community places on this area of land.

As a result of this there will be a 6 week period during which people will be asked for their comments on the Council's proposed decision on the Gobbey's Field Local Green Space designation. A further examination on this specific matter might then follow if Milton Keynes Council considers that it would be appropriate to do so.

Context:

The submitted Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan proposes a number of Local Green Space (LGS) designations, including that of Gobbey's Field. A late objection from the owners of Gobbey's Field was received while the Plan was at examination and the Examiner has taken this objection into account in arriving at his recommendations.

The Examiner has recommended that Gobbey's Field should not be designated as a Local Green Space although he has acknowledged that the issue is finely balanced.

Local Green Space designation

What is Local Green Space?

Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. Designations can be made in local plans and neighbourhood plans and, once made,

means that new development should be ruled out other than in very special circumstances. In order to be designated the green area will need to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Public access to the land is not a pre-requisite for designation as local green space and designation does not in itself confer any rights of public access over what exists at present.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out three criteria against which proposals for LGS designation should be assessed:

“The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.”

The following table sets out the Examiner’s assessment of Gobbey’s Field against the NPPF criteria and Milton Keynes Council’s opinion.

We are keen to receive comments on this assessment during the consultation period.

NPPF criteria	Examiner’s assessment , report para 6.4.26	Milton Keynes Council’s assessment
The green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	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.	We agree with this assessment of Gobbey’s Field in respect of the first criterion.
The green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular	I acknowledge that the recreational role of Gobbey’s Field is not a formal one, in the way the recreation ground is.	We agree that Gobbey’s Field recreational role is not a formal one, in the way the recreation ground is.

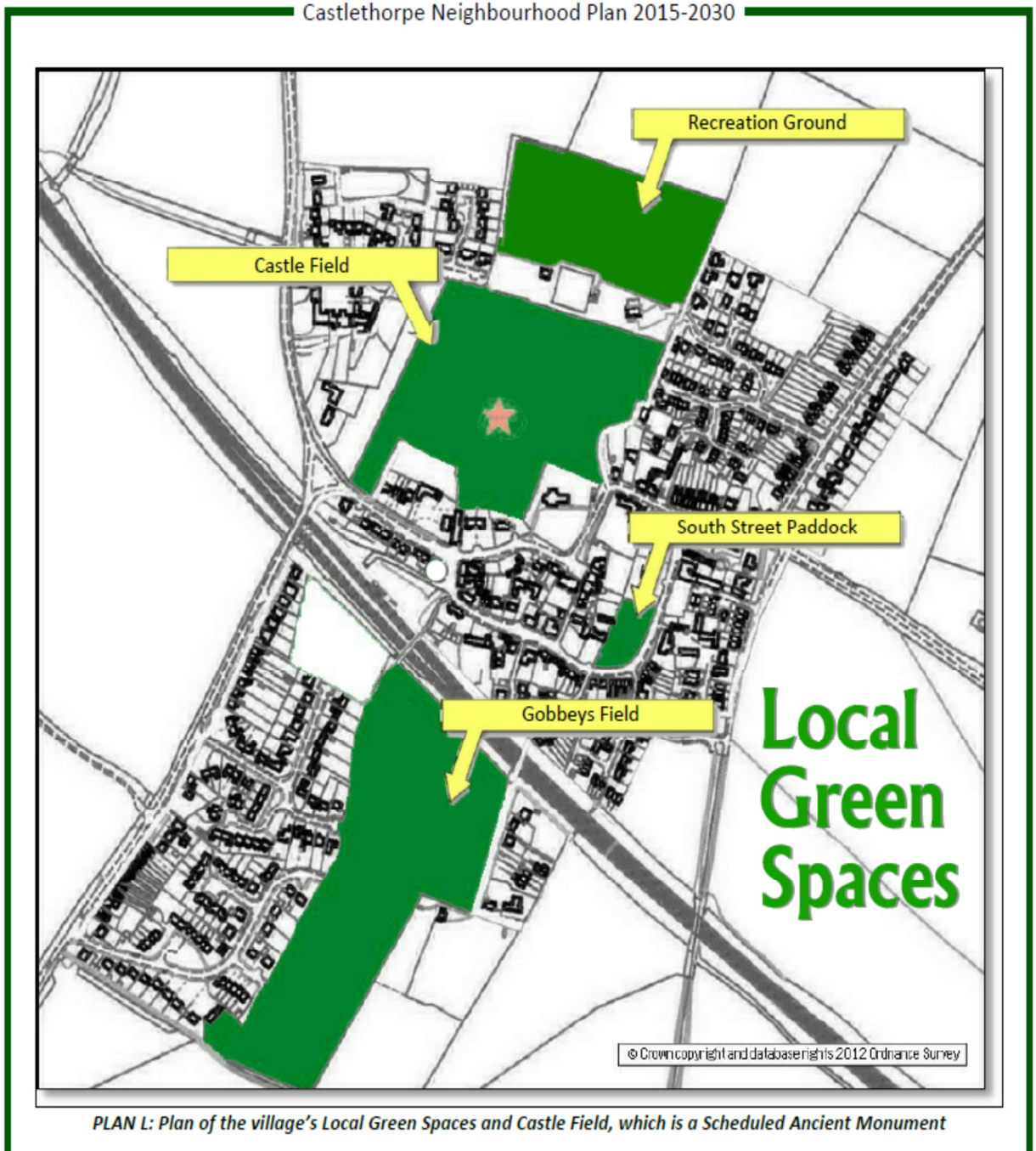
<p>local significance, and</p>	<p>Annexe B of the Plan setting out the Local Green Space Assessment of Sites does not present any evidence for the statement that Gobbey's Field is <i>"without doubt the most utilised Green Space in the Parish"</i> and no evidence to substantiate the range of recreation 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.</p>	<p>We also acknowledge that Annex B of the submitted Plan does not present evidence to substantiate the range of recreation activities referred to.</p> <p>We do, however agree with the Examiner's assessment of the use of the site and its local significance to the Castlethorpe community.</p> <p>In light of the Examiner's conclusions, the Parish Council, in September 2016 surveyed all residents to ascertain the value they place on Gobbey's field and the results are set out in the accompanying supporting documents. Also attached is a letter from the organizer of the annual village Duck Race which explains how the land has been used.</p> <p>It is considered that this additional information provides the evidence needed to substantiate the Parish Council's claims as to the level and type of uses of the land that the examiner considered to be lacking. As such, it is considered that it can be demonstrated that Gobbey's Field is demonstrably special and of particular local significance to the Castlethorpe village community.</p>
<p>The green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land."</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>We agree with the Examiner that the area is local to the settlement, however, we consider that it is not an extensive tract of land, a large section of it being contained by development in the Chequers and Prospect Place.</p>
<p>NPPG advice</p>	<p>Examiner's assessment , report para 6.4.27</p>	<p>Milton Keynes Council's assessment</p>
<p>"Designating any Local Green Space will need to be consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. In particular,</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>We agree with the Examiner's view that designation of Gobbey's Field as Local Green Space would pre-empt Milton Keynes Council's ability to provide for development to meet its housing need, given that Castlethorpe is not a village wherein significant development would</p>

<p>plans must identify sufficient land in suitable locations to meet identified development needs and the Local Green Space designation should not be used in a way that undermines this aim of plan making.”</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>be sustainable. We also agree with his conclusions on the maintenance implications of a Local Green Space designation on this site.</p> <p>Although, we agree with the Examiner that as the site is outside the settlement boundary <i>“the starting point for assessing any residential development proposal in the future is that it would not be acceptable”</i> this statement does not acknowledge the current planning position whereby Milton Keynes Council is unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. The effect of the lack of a 5 year housing land supply is that Milton Keynes Local Plan Policy S10 (Open Countryside) and Core Strategy Policy CS1 (Development Strategy) are currently considered to be out of date (NPPF para. 49).</p>
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Conclusions

	<p>Examiner’s conclusion , report para 6.4.28</p>	<p>Milton Keynes Council’s conclusion</p>
	<p>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.</p>	<p>Having regard to the Examiner’s recommendations in respect of Gobbey’s Field and the additional evidence provided by the Parish Council, Milton Keynes Council considers that there is nothing to suggest that designation as a Local Green Space would be contrary to national policy and advice and therefore Basic Condition No 1 and, as a result, the designation, as per the submitted Castlethorpe Neighborhood Plan, should remain.</p>

Location of Gobbey's Field
(extract from Castlethorpe Neighbourhood Plan)



Consultation period and making comments

The Gobbey's Field Local Green Space proposed decision is available for comments for 6 weeks from **Wednesday 19th October, 2016 to Wednesday 30th November 2016.**

If you have any questions, you can

- Call the Development Plans team on 01908 252358
- E-mail us at, development.plans@milton-keynes.gov.uk or
- Go to the Planning Policy pages of the website <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-policy>
- For general information about Neighbourhood Planning see: <https://www.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning>

Making comments:

Any comments on the Gobbey's Field Local Green Space issue must be received by the Development Plans Team at the following address before 5pm on Wednesday 30th November 2016.

By post to:

Development Plans Team
Milton Keynes Council
Civic Offices
1 Saxon Gate East
Central Milton Keynes
MK9 3EJ

E-mail address: development.plans@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Please be aware that all comments that we receive will be publicly available and may be included on our website.

The Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying documents are available to view on the Council's Neighbourhood Planning webpage at: <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/castlethorpe-neighbourhood-plan>

A hard copy of the documents is also available to inspect at:

Milton Keynes Council Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ, during normal office hours 9am-5.15pm.