

DELEGATED DECISIONS

When: Tuesday 22 August 2023 at 5.30 pm

Where: Room 1.02, Civic, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes,
MK9 3EJ and on [YouTube](#)

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Enquiries

Please contact Jane Crighton on 01908 252333 or jane.crighton@milton-keynes.gov.uk

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Agenda

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Agenda

- 1. Short Breaks for Children and Young People** **(Pages 5 - 10)**
Decision to be taken by Councillor Marand (Leader of the Council).

- 2. South-Central Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) and Residential Placements Frameworks** **(Pages 11 - 16)**
Decision to be taken by Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council).

- 3. Making the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan** **(Pages 17 - 60)**
Decision to be taken by Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council).

Notice of Intention to Hold the Meeting in Private

The public and press may be excluded from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 3 (Information relating to the Financial or Business Affairs of the Authority) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, in order that the meeting may consider the Annex to the following item.

- 4. Procuring Expertise to Support our Planning Service** **(Pages 61 - 66)**
Decision to be taken by Councillor Marland (Leader of the Council).

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Delegated Decisions report



22 August 2023

SHORT BREAKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Name of Cabinet Member **Councillor Zoe Nolan**
(Cabinet member for Children and Families)

Report sponsor **Hannah Soetendal**
Head of Commissioning

Report author **Anima Thawait**
Interim Lead Commissioner
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Exempt / confidential / not for publication	No
Council Plan reference	Ref number / Not in Council Plan
Wards affected	All wards

Executive Summary

Under the Children Act 1989 and the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011, local authorities have a duty to provide as part of the range of services they provide for families, breaks from caring for carers of disabled children to support them to continue to care for their children at home and to allow them to do so more effectively.

Short Breaks services is for children and young people who live in Milton Keynes and have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). Enabling the time off that family carers and children and young people with additional needs receive. These breaks come in different forms. Emphasis on building confidence and independence through inclusive play, play/holiday schemes and enabling social inclusion and skills. Short Breaks is available to children and young people with disabilities and additional needs, aged 0-25. This can be children and young people with an inherent condition or impairment, whether mild, moderate, or severe, diagnosed, or undiagnosed who live in Milton Keynes.

To meet the statutory obligations imposed by the Act, the services was commissioned, and the contract awarded to the current provider Barnardo's Services

Ltd, via a Delegated Decision for a three year term (1 October 2018 to 30 September 2021). It was subsequently extended via an Officer Decision for a two year term (1 October 2021 to 30 September 2023). A waiver also known as a direct award has been submitted to approve 6 months from 1 October 2023 until 31 March 2024. This will enable the Council to procure and recommission Short Breaks services based on the findings of the review.

A working group was established, and engagement activities has allowed the Council to listen to parents and carers lived experiences and supports the direction for Short Breaks Services.

This paper is seeking approval to commence a competitive open tendering process for the purpose of commissioning Short Breaks Play Schemes and Activities.

1. Proposed Decision

- 1.1 That the commencement of a competitive tendering exercise for the purpose of commissioning Short Breaks Play Schemes and activities for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND), be approved.

2. Why is the Decision Needed?

- 2.1 Under the 'Children Act 1989' and the 'Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011', local authorities have a duty to provide, as part of the range of services they provide for families, breaks from caring for carers of disabled children to support them to continue to care for their children at home and to allow them to do so more effectively.
- 2.2 To procure and commission Short Breaks Schemes and Activities for a period of three years from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027 (with an option to extend for a further two years to 31 March 2029).
- 2.3 Estimated value of the contract for the 3-year term will be £0.340m and the value of the extension if utilised will be further £0.226m Overall contract for five years will be £0.567m
- 2.4 Emphasis is placed on prevention and the promotion of wellbeing across the whole population. Children, young people, and their families are empowered through active involvement in decisions about their care through shared decision making, which is fundamental to the approach.
- 2.5 Short Breaks services is for young people who reside in Milton Keynes and have an Educational Health Care Plan, enabling the time off that family carers and children and young people with additional needs receive. These breaks come in different forms. Emphasis on building confidence and independence through inclusive play, play/holiday schemes and enabling social inclusion and skills. Present commissioned service delivers a Short Breaks that is available to children and young people with disabilities and additional needs, aged 0 – 25 years old. This can be children and young people with an inherent condition or

impairment, whether mild, moderate, or severe, diagnosed, or undiagnosed who live in Milton Keynes.

- 2.6 The existing Short Breaks arrangements have not been reviewed for some time. A working group was established to review this, and engagement activity has allowed us to hear and listen to parents and carers lived experiences and supports the direction for Short Breaks services. Consequently, we are now in position to shared vision for Short Breaks. This includes:
- management of a remodelled Short Breaks Voucher Scheme;
 - utilisation of Council premises for some aspects of the provision;
 - widening the scope of provision and eligibility criteria;
 - reallocation of funds used for grant awards; and
 - explore the Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) into short break offer and increase providers and increase types of activities.
- 2.7 Our current Short Breaks offer does not have enough flexibility, choice and access where families are unable to book sessions. Families should be able to access services close to where they live. The services should help parents and children build networks that connect them to their community. This will help Milton Keynes achieve good outcomes for children and families.
- 2.8 It is difficult to keep things the same and manage the demand for Short Breaks. This is not going to get easier with the financial constraints the LA faces. It is anticipated more people will use the services over the next five years. Capacity needs to be commissioned to therefore meet demand. Therefore, the Council needs to provide services that are value for money and spent where there is the greatest need.
- 2.9 The Council wants to make sure people who use Short Breaks are treated fairly and consistently with Short Breaks available for people as and when they need it.
- 2.10 Short Breaks Services are currently provided by Barnardo's Services Ltd with support of other providers. The contract which was for an initial three year term starting on 1 October 2018 and subsequently extended in 2021 for two further years, is due to end on 30 September 2023. The extension was agreed by a officers decision at the time. A further 6 months waiver to enable a direct award to the present provider has been requested until from 1 October 2023 until 31 March 2024.
- 2.11 During the contracted period, Barnardo's Service Ltd has provided a wide range of opportunities to meet the needs of young people and parents / carers which has been appreciated. During 2022 and 2023 the following activites were undertaken:
- The number of occasions accessed by young person with complex needs was 109.

- The number of occasions provision was accessed without complex needs was 626.
- The number of families accessing the service was 245.
- The total number of users aged between 5-25 who accessed the service was 735.
- The total number of hours delivered for age 0–25-year-old was 1986.

2.12 Whilst it was previously intended to recommission services for October 2023, an initial review of existing provision revealed that the Council could be more ambitious than originally thought but required remodelling. The review has indicated widening the options of activities around weekend, school holiday and evening along with maximising use of youth clubs. Previous service specification was outdated and required major changes to accommodate changing needs and widening the scope of provision and eligibility criteria and legislation.

2.13 Commissioners are now in position to recommission the Short Breaks Schemes and Activities service with a new service specification, for a period of three years from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027 (with an option to extend for a further two years to 31 March 2029).

3. Implications of the Decision

Financial	Y	Human rights, equalities, diversity	Y
Legal	Y	Policies or Council Plan	Y
Communication	N	Procurement	Y
Energy Efficiency	N	Workforce	y

(a) Financial Implications

Short Breaks has an allocated budget of £0.113m per annum and there are no additional cost pressure identified at this point.

We continue to experience a period of high inflation in the UK which has put significant pressure on providers. Due to the significant challenges in the current employment market, most providers are requesting an increased uplift to maintain their business. To sustain and increase local providers, the council needs to ensure services are supported to be financially viable or providers may seek business from other local authorities to remain viable.

(b) Legal Implications

The Council has statutory duties under the Children Act 1989 and the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011, to provide sufficient and appropriate short breaks for disabled children and their families as well as ensuring disabled young people aged 13 up to 25 have access to sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time

activities which are for the improvement of their wellbeing under the Education Act 1996.

The report seeks approval to procure and commission the delivery of Short Breaks Scheme and activities for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities in Milton Keynes.

The contract is for a period of three years, commencing 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027 with an option to extend for a further two-year term to 31 March 2029.

The procurement proposals contained in this report will be undertaken in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) and Regulations 74 to 77 of the Public Contracts Regulations (PCRs) 2015 (Light Touch Regime). The threshold for services under the LTR is currently £0.663.54m, therefore, any procurement above this threshold must follow the PCR 2015 procedure.

Under the Local Government Act 1999, the Council is required to achieve best value in the exercise of its functions. By running a competitive procurement exercise and obtaining quotations/ tenders in accordance with the CPRs and PCRs, the Council aims to achieve best value.

(c) Other Implications

The commissioning of the short break and activities service will contribute to the delivery of the following Key Priority and Outcome, as listed in the Milton Keynes Council City Plan (2022 – 2026).

- Tackling Social Inequality.
- Excellent services for our children and young people.

4. Alternatives

4.1. Develop In-House Provision

The cost of developing in house provision can be costly and the Council will struggle to maintain a skilled workforce to deliver such a large and wide range of activities.

5. Timetable for Implementation

August 2023 - seek approval to extent Barnados contract for six months to enable full procurement.

September 2023 - commence a competitive tendering process for the purpose of commissioning Short Breaks Play Schemes and Activities.

December 2023 - secure a provider to deliver Short Breaks Play Schemes and Activities.

January 2024 - formalise the contract with the chosen provider.

February 2024 - seek DD approval for contract award.

March 2024 - issues new contract.

1 April 2024 - new Contract commences.

List of annexes

None

List of background papers

None

Delegated Decisions report



22 August 2023

INDEPENDENT FOSTERING AGENCY AND RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS FRAMEWORKS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Name of Cabinet Member	Councillor Zoe Nolan (Cabinet member for Children and Families)
Report sponsor	Hannah Soetendal Head of Commissioning
Report author	Peter Wong Commissioner E: peter.wong@milton-keynes.gov.uk T: 01908 253218

Exempt / confidential / not for publication	No
Council Plan reference	Ref number / Not in Council Plan
Wards affected	All wards

Executive Summary

The Council is required to place all Looked After Children in accordance with The Children Act 1989: The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.

For a number of years, the Council has subscribed to the LCS (London Care Services) Frameworks which enabled it to commission placements for Looked after Children from an IFA (Independent Fostering Agency) or Residential Care Home.

However, since LCS closed the Frameworks at short notice, earlier this year, placements have been commissioned on a Spot Purchase basis, whilst a suitable, longer term commissioning solution is identified.

Having considered all available options, the Children and Young People Placement and Budget Sufficiency Board has agreed to recommend that the Council apply to join the South-Central IFA and Residential Frameworks, which is commissioned by Southampton Council and managed by BCP (Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole) Council on behalf of a consortium of 18 local authorities.

1. Proposed Decisions

- 1.1. That an application to join the South-Central Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) and Residential Placements Frameworks from 1 October 2023 be approved.
- 1.2. That, due to the current waiver ending on 31 August 2023, the present arrangements for September 2023 be continued.

2. Why is the Decision Needed?

- 2.1. That the current waiver was approved by the deputy Section 151 Officer on 13 February 2023 and ends on 31 August 2023. Therefore, there is a gap of one month during September 2023. Due to this an approval is required to continue with present arrangements for the month of September 2023 while waiting to join the South-Central IFA and residential Frameworks from 1 of October 2023. The ability to join the South-Central framework is every three months, so it is not possible to join any earlier.
- 2.2. The Council is required to place all Looked After Children in accordance with The Children Act 1989: The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.
- 2.3. Until earlier this year, the Council subscribed to the LCS (London Care Services) Framework, in order to commission IFA and Residential Care Home placements from Ofsted regulated providers. On occasions, placements have been commissioned on a Spot Purchase basis, but only where there is no capacity among framework providers to accommodate to be placed.
- 2.4. At the end of 2022, LCS notified all the member local authorities of its intention to close the Framework on 31 March 2023 and advised that the London Care Services Model Contract 2018 - Standard Terms and Conditions, used to confirm placements made via the Framework, would also expire on this date.
- 2.5. Consequently, approval to waive the usual procurement rules was obtained to:
 - (a) direct award contracts for all the existing placements, thereby ensuring continuity of provision until such time as the placement is no longer required and/or the child or young person reaches the age of 18; and
 - (b) Spot Purchase placements whilst an alternative longer-term commissioning solution is identified the waiver ends on 31 August 2023; and
 - (c) although there are no risks associated with having a gap of one month, we do need an approval to ensure that the current procurement process will continue.

- 2.6. Having carefully considered the available options, the Children and Young People Placement and Budget Sufficiency Board has concluded on 24 May 2023 that the South-Central Frameworks offer the most effective way of ensuring compliance procurement rules whilst providing the Council with access to placements at competitive rates.
- 2.7. The South-Central Frameworks are commissioned by Southampton Council and managed by BCP (Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole) Council on behalf of the partner local authorities.
- 2.8. Although there are no risks associated with having a gap of one month, an approval to ensure that the current procurement process will continue in the month of September 2023 is required via Delegated Decision.

3. Implications of the Decision

Financial	Y	Human rights, equalities, diversity	N
Legal	Y	Policies or Council Plan	Y
Communication	N	Procurement	Y
Energy Efficiency	N	Workforce	N

(a) Financial Implications

The total cost of joining the South-Central Placement Frameworks is £10.5k (IFA Framework: £4.5k; Residential Framework is £6k).

The total annual subscription fee is £3k (IFA Framework: £1.5k; Residential Framework: £1.5k).

Additional fees incurred are based on the number of placements made by the Council each year and calculated as a proportion of the overall number of placements made collectively by the participating local authorities. The actual amount payable is calculated as a proportion of £100k for each Framework.

For comparative purposes Reading Council's use of the IFA Frameworks for 2021/22 was 8% of the overall number of placements made, equivalent to £8k in additional fees. For the Residential Framework Reading Council's usage was 2.54%, equivalent to £2.5k

Based on the above the Council could anticipate annual fees of £9.5k for the IFA Framework and £4k for the Residential Homes Framework. The total annual cost for both frameworks would be in the region of £13.5k.

Whilst it cannot be guaranteed that the prices charged by the Framework providers will be less than that which could be achieved on a Spot Purchase basis, it is accepted that continuing to Spot Purchase provision in the longer term would not be compliant with procurement rules.

(b) Legal Implications

The Council is required to place all Looked After Children in accordance with The Children Act 1989: The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.

The South-Central Frameworks are commissioned by Southampton Council and managed by Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council will enable the Council to secure placements for Looked After Children with an IFA or Residential Care Home.

The Frameworks commenced on the 1st of April 2022 and are intended to run for an initial period of four years with scope, at the discretion of the consortium, to be extended by a further two periods, each of 12 months.

To join the Frameworks, the Council is required to agree to the terms of the 'Framework Co-ordination Partnership Agreement' which sets out roles, responsibilities and working arrangements for the co-ordination and operation of the Framework(s) and the 'Framework Agreement', which sets out the terms and conditions that providers except for any children and young people placed with them.

The Council's legal team have reviewed the above documents and confirmed that there are no onerous terms or conditions that are of concern.

Whilst approval obtained via waiver to Spot Purchase services provided a necessary short-term solution, the Frameworks will ensure that in future services will be obtained in a way that is fully compliant with procurement rules.

(c) Procurement Implications

Whilst it is acceptable, given the circumstances, to commission placements on a Spot Purchase basis as an interim measure, a longer term solution is required in order to comply with procurement rules. The South Central IFA and Residential Frameworks provide a commissioning solution that will ensure compliance.

(d) Council Plan

The Frameworks will contribute to the delivery of the following Key Priority and Outcome, as listed in the Milton Keynes Council City Plan (2022 - 2026).

- Tackling Social Inequality.
- Excellent services for our children and young people.

4. Alternatives

4.1. Consideration has been given to establishing the Council's Frameworks. However, this is not thought to be a viable solution at this time, for the following reasons:

- The timescales for commissioning and procuring new frameworks would result in the Council having to spot purchase provision for up to a year.
- There is a lack of incentive for providers to join, given the relatively low volume of placements required by the Council each year.
- The Council's Frameworks are unlikely to generate provider prices for placements that compare favourably with those achieved by larger regional frameworks.

4.2. Communication with over 36 local authorities that currently subscribe to CCRAAG (The Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group) has identified the following Frameworks that the Council could potentially join. (Those known to be operating in the north of England have been excluded).

4.3. Option 1: Commissioning Alliance DPV (Dynamic Purchasing Vehicle)

- The DPV is seen by a number of local authorities, mainly in London and the Southeast, as a viable alternative to the LCS Frameworks.
- Similarly, a number of providers that were previously listed on the LCS Frameworks have joined the DPV.
- The Cost of joining the DPV and associated annual costs are relatively high (Joining Fee: £15k; Annual Fee: £70k) and likely to only represent good value for money where the local authority is a high-volume user (Join Fee: £15k; Annual Fee: £70k)

4.4. Option 2: South Central Frameworks (**recommended**)

(Commissioned by Southampton Council and managed by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council)

- Considered by a number of local authorities, many of which are outside of London and the South East, to be a viable alternative to the LCS Frameworks.
- Costs of joining the DPV and associated annual fee (Joining Fee: £10.5k; Annual Fee: £3k) are significantly less than for the Commissioning Alliance DPV.
- Additional fees incurred, based on the number of placements made by the Council each year and calculated as a proportion of the overall number of placements made collectively by the participating local authorities are highly unlikely to rise to the point where the Commissioning Alliance DPV offers comparable value for money.

4.5. Option 3: Newham Council DPS

- Having previously subscribed to the LCS Placements Frameworks, The IFA and Residential DPS was developed to mitigate the risks arising from its closure.
- As to be expected for a new DPS there are relatively few providers that have joined, and most are London based.
- Whilst Newham Council is open to other local authorities joining the DPS there is little or no incentive to expand the number of providers on the framework whilst Newham remains the only local authority that has use of it
- Costs of joining and annual fees have not yet been determined as no other local authorities have previously considered subscribing to it.

5. Timetable for Implementation

- 5.1. An application to join the Frameworks will need to be considered and approved by the South-Central Partnership Board.
- 5.2. On approval the Council will have access to the Frameworks from 1 October 2023.

List of Annexes

None

List of Background Papers

None

Delegated Decisions report



22 August 2023

MAKING THE HAVERSHAM-CUM-LITTLE LINFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Name of Cabinet Member	Councillor Peter Marland (Leader of the Council)
Report sponsor	Paul Thomas Director of Planning and Placemaking
Report author	David Blandamer Senior Urban Designer david.blandamer@milton-keynes.gov.uk 01908 254836

Exempt / confidential / not for publication	No
Council Plan reference	Not in Council Plan
Wards affected	Newport Pagnell North and Hanslope Ward

Executive Summary

The report seeks agreement to recommend to Council that it makes (brings into legal force) the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan, following the successful referendum held on 20 July 2023.

1. Proposed Decision

1.1 That Council be recommended to make the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan pursuant to the provisions of Section 38(A)(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Why is the Decision Needed?

2.1 The Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the Council for examination and was subsequently publicised for a six-week period, ending on 13 January 2023. All comments received were then passed to the Examiner, Andrew Matheson, who submitted his report on the Plan in April 2023, stating that the plan met the relevant basic conditions and requirements, and should proceed to referendum.

- 2.2 Following the examination, in consultation with the Parish Council, we accepted the examiner’s recommendations and proceeded to make arrangements for a referendum to be held on 20 July 2023.
- 2.3 The Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan (**Annex A**) was successful at the referendum. In total, 249 people voted ‘Yes’ and 33 ‘No’; turnout was 43.78%. Under Section 38(3A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 a neighbourhood plan comes into force as part of the statutory development plan once it has been approved by referendum and used to determine relevant planning applications. The plan must still be made by the local planning authority within 8 weeks of the referendum.
- 2.4 In accordance with the Act, the Neighbourhood Plan would be compatible with retained European Union and European Convention on Human Rights obligations. It would also meet the basic conditions (paragraph 37 of National Planning Policy Framework) required for neighbourhood plans. This was also the view of the Neighbourhood Plan examiner, as set out in his report (attached at **Annex B** to the report).

3. Implications of the Decision

Financial	N	Human rights, equalities, diversity	Y
Legal	Y	Policies or Council Plan	Y
Communication	N	Procurement	N
Energy Efficiency	N	Workforce	N

(a) Financial Implications

Publicity and officer support costs associated with making neighbourhood plans is met within the Urban Design budget and staff resources to implement the plan come from the existing staff within the Development Plans and Development Management teams.

(b) Legal Implications

The Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan has been consulted on in accordance with the relevant regulations and subjected to a referendum in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012.

In accordance with Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Regulations, we must, as soon as possible after deciding to make a neighbourhood development plan:

- (a) publish on the website and in such other manner as is likely to bring the Plan to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area:
- (i) the decision document;
 - (ii) details of where and when the decision document may be inspected;

- (b) send a copy of the decision document to:
 - (i) the qualifying body; and
 - (ii) any person who asked to be notified of the decision.

In accordance with Regulation 20, we must, as soon as possible after making a neighbourhood development plan:

- (a) publish on the website and in such other manner as is likely to bring the Plan to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area:
 - (i) the neighbourhood development plan;
 - (ii) details of where and when the neighbourhood development plan may be inspected; and
 - (iii) notify any person who asked to be notified of the making of the neighbourhood development plan that it has been made and where and when it may be inspected.

A Decision Statement (attached at **Annex C** to the report) will be published once Council makes the plan. As with any planning decision there is a risk of legal challenge, but that risk has been managed by ensuring that the regulations are being followed and that our decision-making process is clear and transparent.

4. Alternatives

- 4.1 In the event of a 'Yes' vote in the referendum, we are obliged to proceed to make the Plan as outlined above, unless there is a breach of a retained EU obligation or Convention rights. The alternative option is to recommend to the Council that the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan is not made, if it is considered that there is a breach of a retained EU obligation or Convention rights.

5. Timetable for Implementation

- 5.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will be made by Council at its meeting to be held on 13 September 2023.

List of Annexes

Annex A	Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan Milton Keynes City Council (milton-keynes.gov.uk)
Annex B	Examiner's Report
Annex C	Decision document for making the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan

List of Background Papers

- The Localism Act, 2011
- The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012
- National Planning Policy Framework paras 29 & 37

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**HAVERSHAM-CUM-LITTLE LINFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
2016 - 2031**

**The Report of the Independent Examiner to Milton Keynes City Council on
the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan**

**Andrew Matheson MSc MPA DipTP MRTPI FCIH
Independent Examiner**

19th April 2023

Summary

I was appointed by Milton Keynes City Council, in agreement with the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish Council, in January 2023 to undertake the Independent Examination of the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan.

The Examination has been undertaken by written representations. I visited the Neighbourhood Area on 19th March 2023 after resolving my initial enquiries of the Qualifying Body.

The Neighbourhood Plan proposes a local range of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Area. There is an evident focus on safeguarding the very distinctive, local character of the area whilst accommodating future change and growth.

The Plan has been underpinned by extensive community support and engagement. The social, environmental and economic aspects of the issues identified have been brought together into a coherent plan which adds appropriate local detail to sit alongside Plan:MK, the Local Plan for Milton Keynes.

Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this Report I have concluded that the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.

I recommend that the referendum should be held within the Neighbourhood Area.

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Introduction

This report sets out the findings of the Independent Examination of the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan 2016 - 2031. The Plan was submitted to Milton Keynes City Council by Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish Council in their capacity as the 'qualifying body' responsible for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They aim to allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently incorporated within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 and this continues to be the principal element of national planning policy. A new NPPF was published in July 2021 and it is against the content of this NPPF that the Plan is examined.

This report assesses whether the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan is legally compliant and meets the 'basic conditions' that such plans are required to meet. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends modifications to its policies and supporting text. This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome, the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan would then be used in the process of determining planning applications within the Plan boundary as an integral part of the wider Development Plan.

The Role of the Independent Examiner

The Examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the legislative and procedural requirements. I was appointed by Milton Keynes City Council, in agreement with Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish Council, to conduct the Examination of the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan and to report my findings. I am independent of both Milton Keynes City Council and Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish Council. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.

I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I have over 40 years' experience in various local authorities and third sector bodies as well as with the professional body for planners in the United Kingdom. I am a Chartered Town Planner and a panel member for the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service (NPIERS). I am a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

In my role as Independent Examiner I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the Examination:

- the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to a referendum; or
- the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
- the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

As part of this process I must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the Basic Conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. If recommending that the Neighbourhood Plan should go forward to referendum, I must then consider whether or not the referendum area should extend beyond the Neighbourhood Area to which the Plan relates.

In examining the Plan, I am also required, under paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to check whether:

- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated Neighbourhood Area in line with the requirements of Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
- the Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the 2004 Act (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one Neighbourhood Area);
- the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.

These are helpfully covered in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement and, subject to the contents of this Report, I can confirm that I am satisfied that each of the above points has been properly addressed and met.

In undertaking this Examination I have considered the following documents:

- Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan 2016 - 2031 as submitted
- Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement (July 2022)
- Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement (September 2022)
- Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report (July 2022)
- Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report (February 2022)
- Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement Appropriate Assessment Screening (January 2022)
- Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan Site Assessment Report (February 2022)
- Content at: www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/haversham-cum-little-linford-neighbourhood-plan
- Content at: www.havershamltlinford.org/neighbourhood-planning
- Representations made to the Regulation 16 public consultation on the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan
- Plan:MK
- Milton Keynes Site Allocations Plan (adopted July 2018)
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)

- Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (March 2014 and subsequent updates)

I carried out an unaccompanied visit to the Neighbourhood Area on 19th March 2023. I looked at all the various sites and locations identified in the Plan document in their rural setting.

The legislation establishes that, as a general rule, Neighbourhood Plan examinations should be held without a public hearing, by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations made to the submitted plan which I felt made their points with clarity, I was satisfied that the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan could be examined without the need for a public hearing and I advised Milton Keynes City Council accordingly. The Qualifying Body and the Local Planning Authority have helpfully responded to my enquiries so that I may have a thorough understanding of the facts and thinking behind the Plan, and the correspondence is being shown on Milton Keynes City Council's Neighbourhood Planning website for the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan.

Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Area

A map showing the boundary of the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Area has been provided within the Neighbourhood Plan. Further to an application made by Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish Council, Milton Keynes City Council approved the designation of the Neighbourhood Area on 8th February 2017. This satisfied the requirement in line with the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan under section 61G(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Consultation

In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the Qualifying Body has prepared a Consultation Statement to accompany the Plan.

The Planning Practice Guidance says:

“A qualifying body should be inclusive and open in the preparation of its Neighbourhood Plan [or Order] and ensure that the wider community:

- is kept fully informed of what is being proposed
- is able to make their views known throughout the process
- has opportunities to be actively involved in shaping the emerging Neighbourhood Plan [or Order]
- is made aware of how their views have informed the draft Neighbourhood Plan [or Order].” (Reference ID: 41-047-20140306)

The submitted Consultation Statement notes that, following the formal designation of the Neighbourhood Area, in March 2018 a well-attended public meeting was held in the Haversham Sports and Social Centre as a first step in community awareness and

information gathering for the neighbourhood planning process. This was followed in June by a detailed paper-based survey of the residents in the Parish. 334 households received two copies of the questionnaire and all residents aged 16 and over were invited to participate. There was an impressive, estimated response rate of 77%.

In February 2019 parishioners were invited through an appeal in the Parish Magazine to join the parish councillors working on the Neighbourhood Plan. As a result four Task Groups were set up, each with responsibility for gathering information in a particular area of community interest.

In July 2019 a paper-based Housing Needs Survey was undertaken across the Parish, to collect parishioners' comments and identify potential need for future housing within the Parish. The results were recorded in the Final Housing Needs Survey Report.

In November 2019 a 'Call for Sites' letter was sent to all landowners adjoining the existing settlement areas of New Haversham and Old Haversham. 11 sites were put forward by landowners and were assessed against common criteria in the report Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan Site Assessment Report (February 2022). Due to the Covid pandemic the Parish Council was unable to hold the planned public consultation exercise on the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Instead, a Consultation document and questionnaire were issued to every household in the Parish. The questionnaire was designed to gather and evaluate residents' responses to the short list of five potential small-scale sites for housing development and views on a range of policy options which were being considered for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan. The consultation documents and the Analysis and Summary Report were published on the Parish Council website

In March 2022 the Pre-Submission Plan was published on the Parish Council website for six weeks public consultation. Every dwelling in the Parish received notice of the Regulation 14 Consultation. The parish magazine, website and social media were also used to alert as many people and organisations in the parish as possible about the consultation process. In addition, the Parish Council's Annual Parish Public Meeting in April 2022 included an update on the Neighbourhood Plan process followed by a question-and-answer session. A summary of the representations made by the statutory bodies was prepared for the Steering Group by consultants. The changes recommended as a result of the consultation responses were accepted by the Steering Group and the details of the changes made, and the comments which prompted the changes, were included in the report titled: HcLL Reg 14 summary report May 2022, available on the Parish Council website. Community comments were discussed by the Steering Group and included in the document titled Report on Community Responses to Reg 14, which was made available on the Parish Council website.

I noted to the Qualifying Body that a representation, reflecting comments in some others, commented: "[At the Regulation 14 Consultation] Over twelve pages of residents' comments are included and these resulted in two changes to the draft Neighbourhood Plan. One of the two changes was also requested by Milton Keynes City Council. No feedback has been offered on the individual points we raised and overall It seems that the consultation exercise consists of requests for comments, consideration of the

comments, with little resulting change and, importantly, no feedback.” The Qualifying Body explained that “Community comments were shared with and discussed comment by comment by the Steering Group and HcLLPC [the Parish Council] and the limited changes to the Submission Plan which the Steering Group and HcLLPC felt were necessary to clarify the process to some respondents [were] completed Emails were sent to all statutory and community responders to thank them for their contributions and comments following the Regulation 14 consultation and to inform them of the next steps including directing them to the HcLLPC website as follows:

‘The HcLL Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group are very grateful for your participation in the recent Regulation 14 Neighbourhood Plan Consultation. All the comments received have been read and discussed by the Steering Group. Where amendments to the plan are required as a result of consultation comments received, these will be included in the final Neighbourhood Plan Submission Document before it is submitted to Milton Keynes Council within the next two to three months. All consultation comments received and reports detailing changes to the final plan will be included among the final submission documents and made available on the Parish Council website.’ It may also be worth noting that the Annual Parish Public Meeting was held on 13 April 2022, a few days before the end of the consultation period. Key extracts of the plan were displayed as large posters in the meeting hall and those attending the meeting were encouraged to inspect these, which most did. Considerable time was also allowed during the meeting for an open discussion around the proposed plan, the consultation process and next steps.”

A representation further challenged the accuracy of the response to me from the Qualifying Body, on the basis that their experience was different. However, it transpired that the Qualifying Body had explained what had happened at the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation whereas the respondents exchange of views with the Qualifying Body had pre-dated that. It is evident to me that the respondent was given the opportunity to express views and those views did impact the way that further consultation was conducted, partly during the challenging period of the pandemic. The respondent is further concerned that not all such contributions have been appropriately acknowledged, but in my view that matter of complaint does not detract from the evident interaction with the wider community from which the Plan has benefitted.

Accordingly, overall, I am satisfied that the consultation process accords with the requirements of the Regulations and the Practice Guidance and that, in having regard to national policy and guidance, the Basic Conditions have been met. In reaching my own conclusions about the specifics of the content of the Plan I will later note points of agreement or disagreement with Regulation 16 representations, just as the Qualifying Body has already done for earlier consultations. That does not imply or suggest that the consultation has been inadequate, merely that a test against the Basic Conditions is being applied.

Representations Received

Consultation on the submitted Plan, in accordance with Neighbourhood Planning Regulation 16, was undertaken by Milton Keynes City Council for eight weeks from Friday

18th November 2022 to Friday 13th January 2023. I have been passed the representations – 21 in total – which were generated by the consultation and which are included alongside the submitted Plan on Milton Keynes City Council’s Neighbourhood Planning website. I have not mentioned every representation individually within this Report but this is not because they have not been thoroughly read and considered in relation to my Examiner role, rather their detail may not add to the pressing of my related recommendations which must ensure that the Basic Conditions are met.

The Neighbourhood Plan

Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish Council is to be congratulated on its extensive efforts to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for their area that will guide development activity over the period to 2031. I can see that a sustained effort has been put into developing a Plan around a vision that by 2031: “Haversham-cum-Little Linford remains a rural area distinct from the city of Milton Keynes. The parish has undergone some managed change to improve quality of life and access to local housing whilst preserving the rural village environment. These changes have not only avoided harm to biodiversity and connectivity but also helped create new ecological value and improved connectivity.”

The Plan document is well presented with a combination of text, maps and Policies that are, subject to the specific points that I make below, well laid out and helpful for the reader. Some effort is apparent to keep the Plan to a manageable length by not overextending the potential subject matter and the coverage of that.

It is an expectation of Neighbourhood Plans that they should address the issues that are identified through community consultation, set within the context of higher-level planning policies. There is no prescribed content and no requirement that the robustness of proposals should be tested to the extent prescribed for Local Plans. Where there has been a failure by the Qualifying Body to address an issue in the round, leading to an inadequate statement of policy, it is part of my role wherever possible to see that the community’s intent is sustained in an appropriately modified wording for the policy. It is evident that the community has made positive use of “direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area” (Planning Practice Guidance Reference ID: 41-001-20140306).

Individually I can see that the Policies address legitimate matters for a Neighbourhood Plan as identified with the community. The NPPF (para 16f) says that Plans should “serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant).” Representations request repetition of certain Local Plan content as affirmation that, in summary, “the Haversham Neighbourhood Plan does not prevent the ability for farmer/agricultural business to diversify their businesses outside of agriculture”. The Qualifying Body has been content to rely on existing national and local policies in regard to these matters. I can confirm that this is an appropriate approach and, as noted in the quotation above, an NPPF expectation.

I will later look at the Policies in turn so as to ensure that the Basic Conditions are met, which include an obligation to be in general conformity with Plan:MK strategic policies.

Having considered all the evidence and representations submitted as part of the Examination I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to national planning policies and guidance in general terms. It works from a positive vision for the future of the Neighbourhood Area and promotes policies that are, subject to amendment to variable degrees, proportionate and sustainable. The Plan sets out the community's priorities whilst seeking to identify and safeguard Haversham-cum-Little Linford's distinctive features and character. The plan-making had to find ways to reconcile the external challenges that are perceived as likely to affect the area with the positive vision agreed with the community. All such difficult tasks were approached with transparency, with input as required and support from the Milton Keynes City Council.

However, in the writing up of the work into the Plan document, it is sometimes the case that the phraseology is imprecise, not helpful, or it falls short in justifying aspects of the selected policy. This is not uncommon in a community-prepared planning document and something that can readily be addressed in most instances. Accordingly, I have been obliged to recommend modifications so as to ensure both clarity and meeting of the 'Basic Conditions'. In particular, Plan policies as submitted may not meet the obligation to "contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals" (NPPF para 16). I bring this particular reference to the fore because it will be evident as I examine the policies individually and consider whether they meet or can meet the 'Basic Conditions'.

Basic Conditions

The Independent Examiner is required to consider whether a Neighbourhood Plan meets the "Basic Conditions", as set out in law following the Localism Act 2011; in December 2018 a fifth Basic Condition was added relating to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the Plan must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Plan for the area;
- be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations;
- not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017(d).

The submitted Basic Conditions Statement has very helpfully set out to address the issues in relation to these requirements in the same order as above and has tabulated the relationship between the policy content of the Plan and its higher tier equivalents. I note that the relevant Development Plan documents comprise Plan:MK and the Milton Keynes Site Allocations Plan 2018. From the accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment, I am satisfied that the making of the Plan will not breach the Basic Condition relating to the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

I have examined and will below consider the Neighbourhood Plan against all of the Basic Conditions above, utilising the supporting material provided in the Basic Conditions Statement and other available evidence as appropriate.

The Plan in Detail

I will address the aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan content that are relevant to the Examination in the same sequence as the Plan. Recommendations are identified with a bold heading and italics, and I have brought them together as a list at the end of the Report.

General drafting points

The Council has requested that all stray references to 'Milton Keynes Council' or 'MKC' are updated and changed to 'Milton Keynes City Council' or 'MKCC'.

Front cover

A Neighbourhood Plan must specify the period during which it is to have effect. I note that there is a prominent reference to the Plan period 2016 – 2031 on the front cover. I noted to the Qualifying Body that although the Plan period is shown as starting in 2016, the Plan was actually submitted in 2022. I have not identified anything that might suggest that the Plan relies on data sets or other material that predates 2022. I would therefore expect the Plan period to be 2022 – 2031. This point is different from one made in a representation which confuses the Plan validity period with the span of years addressed in the Plan. In response the Qualifying Body commented: "The HcLLNP plan period aligns itself with the plan period of the adopted plan:MK". However, there is no requirement for Neighbourhood Plans to parallel Local Plan periods and I consider that the plan period should clearly relate to the period over which it is expected to exercise influence. The references to "Submission Version" should now be removed.

Guide to Reading this Plan & Glossary

This is a helpful introductory section, especially for those unfamiliar with reading Neighbourhood Plan documents. I noted that the "evidence base published alongside the plan on the Parish Council's website"; however, the Qualifying Body agreed that it is important that documents essential to the application of Policies are included with or within the Plan itself. I will be considering this issue as I progress through the Plan document.

A representation objects to some of the definitions used in the Glossary. However, the objections appear to relate to the context within which the terms are used later in the Plan. It is appropriate for planning terms to be introduced for the benefit of a wide range of readers.

Foreword

I would simply note that the Plan Examination is conducted by an Examiner rather than an "inspector".

Contents

The Contents page may need to be reviewed in the light of recommendations in the Report.

1. Introduction & Background

No comments.

Recommendation 1:

1.1 Consistently ensure that references to ‘Milton Keynes Council’ or ‘MKC’ are updated and changed to ‘Milton Keynes City Council’ or ‘MKCC’.

1.2 Amend the front cover to replace “2016-2031” with ‘2022-2031’ and to remove “Submission version”.

1.3 Within the “Foreword” replace “inspector” with ‘Examiner’.

1.4 Review the Contents page in the light of the recommendations in this Report.

2. The Neighbourhood Area

A representation has challenged the accuracy of paragraph 2.2 where it refers to Wildlife Corridors; a source reference is needed to allow anyone to check whether the text accurately reflects the MKCC position, and the Qualifying Body has now provided that. Similarly, the accuracy of paragraph 2.4 is challenged where it is stated that “much of the southern and eastern part of the parish flood” on the basis of a reference back to the Environment Agency Flood Maps; as noted below, the Qualifying Body has agreed that the supporting map should be the current Government mapping of surface water flood risk. A challenge has also been made to paragraph 2.12 where it is said “the parish remains a rural area distinct from the city” - but my visit to the area confirmed the rural nature of the Parish.

A representation suggests that the maps reproduced are not entirely accurate or could be misleading, again emphasising the value of source referencing. The Qualifying Body and the local authority jointly confirmed that Plan B is a copy of the interactive online mapping system MKCC operates (<https://mapping.milton-keynes.gov.uk>) and is considered to be accurate. They have further explained that the wildlife corridor (Plan:MK Policy L2) isn’t contiguous with the linear park but does follow the River Ouse valley. Since the designations derive from the Local Plan, I conclude that the map and its referencing, including in the related supporting text, ought to be from the Local Plan.

Plan C is dated 2015 which, for the information being mapped, is not current. The representation suggests that the map should “follow the Flood Maps produced by the Environment Agency”. There is evident danger that reproducing maps which need to be updated frequently is likely to mislead unless a source reference is provided for where current maps will be found. The Qualifying Body agreed that the supporting map might be changed to the current Government mapping of surface water flood risk. The Qualifying Body has agreed that it would be helpful if the boundary for the Neighbourhood Area was superimposed on Map C and other similarly scaled maps.

Recommendation 2:

Under the heading “2. The Neighbourhood Area”:

2.1 Amend the opening of paragraph 2.2 to read: “The Ouse Valley is designated as a Linear Park that runs along the edges of the city and separates it from the parish (see Plan B on page 7) and, although not contiguous, there is also a designated Wildlife Corridor”; also add to the end of the paragraph: ‘(paragraph 12.11 of Plan:MK)’.

2.2 Replace Plan B with the relevant Linear Park detail from the Plan:MK Policy Maps with the Neighbourhood Area boundary overlaid; provide a hyperlinked reference to the source maps.

2.3 Replace Plan C with the flood risk map publicly available on the Government website and, if possible, overlay the Neighbourhood Area boundary: <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map?eastings=483438&northings=241704&map=SurfaceWater>; reference the source.

3. Planning Policy Context

This is a helpful context section. It could be improved with some additional source references for:

- MKC First Homes Policy Position Statement March 2022
- “In light of this MKC has issued a housing requirement figure of 1 to rural parishes”
- “the Parish Council is mindful of the provisions of §14 of the NPPF in respect of securing protection for the parish”.

A representation challenges the accuracy of paragraph 3.7 where it is stated that “The plan [ambiguous as to which plan] requires no further housing site allocations to be made in Haversham to 2031”. The same representation challenges paragraph 3.8: “Although expansion to the north into the parish is likely to be very limited given the environmental and landscape sensitivities and constraints, green infrastructure and water management function”. In both instances, source references or actual quotes would help to assure clarity. The Qualifying Body has suggested text amendments to address these issues, upon which my recommendations are based.

A challenge to the accuracy of Plan D is quickly resolved because the linked content is readily accessible.

Recommendation 3:

Under the heading “3. Planning Policy Context”:

3.1 Replace paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8 as follows:

‘3.7 Additionally, Policy DS1 of Plan:MK defines Haversham as ‘Villages and rural settlements’ where the approach to delivering new development places emphasis on neighbourhood plans. During the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan, MKCC confirmed in a briefing note ([link](#)) that Plan:MK requires no further housing site allocations to be made in Haversham to 2031 but assumes that, across the whole Milton Keynes area, 35 dwellings per annum in the rural area will come forward as ‘windfall schemes’ (see Table 4.4 in the adopted Plan:MK Housing Supply). The briefing note also confirmed that MKCC has issued

an indicative housing requirement figure of 1 to rural parishes. There have been no subsequent changes to MKCC's adopted formal position on this matter.

3.8 However, a review of Plan:MK is currently in its early stages. A consultation on the ambition and objectives of The New City Plan concluded in March 2023 and the Parish Council will continue to engage in this process. The adopted MK Futures 2050 Strategy is a non-statutory framework for the longer-term spatial development of Milton Keynes which will inform the Plan:MK Review. The Strategy indicates that significant further growth is planned for Milton Keynes. Although expansion to the north into the Parish is likely to be very limited (given the environmental and landscape sensitivities and constraints, green infrastructure and water management function), as recognised at 'Discounted Options' on page 74 of the Milton Keynes Strategy for 2050 ([link](#)), the Parish Council is mindful of the provisions of §14 of the NPPF ([link](#)) in respect of securing some protection for the Parish.'

The links included above are as follows:

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/about-neighbourhood-planning>

<https://www.mkfutures2050.com>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf

3.2 Add the Neighbourhood Area boundary to Plan D.

4. Community Views on Planning Issues

No comments.

5. Vision, Objectives and Land Use Policies

Vision and Objectives

No comments.

Land Use Policies

POLICY HLL1: SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

A representation comments: "Policy HLL1 should be modified so that it allows for a degree of flexibility consistent with the requirements of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and allows for the consideration of sustainable development opportunities on sites adjoining the settlement where the benefits of the scheme significantly and demonstrably outweighed any harm, if these could assist with delivering the overall objectives of the HcLLNP." However, I can see that Plan:MK (Policy DS1) has already established the principle of defining Settlement Boundaries for villages and rural settlements. I note that the boundary for New Haversham repeats the boundary included in Plan:MK whereas the boundary for Old Haversham is new but follows the methodology adopted for Plan:MK. Accordingly Policy HLL1 shows general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.

Policy HLL1 meets the Basic Conditions.

POLICY HLL2: HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Planning Practice Guidance says: “A neighbourhood plan can allocate sites for development, including housing. A qualifying body should carry out an appraisal of options and an assessment of individual sites against clearly identified criteria” (Paragraph: 042 Reference ID: 41-042-20170728). The context for Policy HLL2 is appropriately explained. However, a number of representations query a potential conflict of interests with the chosen consultants both evaluating the offered sites whilst representing the interest of the owners of the site ultimately chosen through their process. It is not clear that ‘representing’ is actually the case; the consultant had been requested to report authoritatively on the deliverability of the chosen site, which is one of the matters on which I would expect to see evidence. The consultant has clarified: “On occasions we are asked by Qualifying Bodies (QB) to work with a landowner that does not have an agreement with a developer to provide information for a proposed allocation. This allows the QB to put in front of the community enough information to enable them to understand and comment on a draft proposal. It also assists the SA/SEA with basic site information to provide an assessment on the reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures. Here, the QB had determined its vision for the HcLLNP and had made its decision to allocate the site before we had any involvement with the landowner. [The Qualifying Body] was concerned that the information provided to that point was insufficient to support an allocation policy. It required further site testing (including its deliverability or developability), a clearer site proposition to inform the allocation policy and the provision of necessary evidence for the Regulation 14 consultation As is common in these cases, the QB considered that the landowner’s and community’s interests were aligned and that there could therefore be no conflict of interest.” I am therefore satisfied that the process for arriving at the content for Policy HLL2 was appropriate.

A number of representations queried the basis for the choice of land in Old Haversham for housing development; one representation echoes others: “Given the still early stage of the New City Plan and the current uncertainty regarding the wider planning strategy and the lack of evidence of local housing need, it is queried whether a major development of 16 dwellings represents an appropriately sized housing allocation for Old Haversham consistent with its current status in the Local Plan settlement hierarchy as a ‘village and rural settlement’”. The Qualifying Body responded: “In preparing the HcLLNP the local community recognised the value of a small housing development for younger people and downsizers to breathe new life into its settlements and also in sustaining its valuable community assets. It was also recognised, as demonstrated in the Environment and Design Task Group Report published in the Evidence Base that Little Linford is a small, isolated settlement surrounded by agricultural land. Old Haversham is a traditional village settlement with access to a number of recreational uses including accessibility to the larger New Haversham, and its facilities. It was therefore considered that Old Haversham and New Haversham could potentially benefit from a small housing scheme with the provisions of paragraph 78 and 79 of the NPPF in mind. The Site Assessment Report included in the submission documents fully details the site evaluation process which included

consideration of all of the priority policy objectives with no particular objective in isolation. HcLLPC also notes that the provisions for small-scale affordable housing schemes to meet local rural needs in the parish (Rural Exception Sites) set out in national and strategic policy will continue to operate in the parish and such a scheme has already been successfully delivered in the parish elsewhere.” Accordingly, I am satisfied that a clear, criteria-based approach has been adopted; whilst it might be argued that different weightings might have produced different results, the actual outcome shows reasonable and realistic regard for the constraints identified.

A follow-up representation comments: “I would respectfully suggest that the site proposed on the plan does not appear to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and does not meet the basic conditions. On this basis we would ask that this site is removed from the plan and does not get your approval for a referendum.” As I have argued above, my considered view is that the site assessment approach adopted for the Neighbourhood Plan was appropriate and carried out conscientiously. The Development Strategy section of Plan:MK at paragraph 4.30 notes: “the approach to delivering new development in villages and other rural settlements now places the emphasis on neighbourhood plans” and this is the basis for its Policy DS1. Doubtless this is because such plans have the opportunity to be more sensitive to local housing needs and local settlement issues. Accordingly, my conclusion remains that the basic conditions are met. The identification of sites to meet housing needs within a Neighbourhood Plan fulfils the expectation of the NPPF (paragraph 15) that, instead of speculative development, “The planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings.”

The Qualifying Body advised: “The Site Assessment Report, in particular Appendix C for the allocated site in Policy HLL2, included in the submission documents demonstrates how site capacities has [*sic*] been derived”. However, a number of representations queried how foul drainage would be achieved at the scale envisaged given the lack of mains drainage at the location. The Qualifying Body subsequently provided details of the drainage proposals and I suggest that these are added to the Appendix content.

I and others had a few detailed queries on the Policy wording:

- The allocated site is actually north of 27 High Street, Old Haversham, not south.
- In element Bi it is suggested that the “developable area is 1 Ha” – the document “Design Proposals Site 11” does not suggest there are undevelopable areas, so it is unclear what distinction is being made here.
- In elements Bii and iii it is unclear what is “full regard” is intended to suggest. The local authority has pointed out that “For clarity, the policy should state that it is MKCC’s First Homes Policy Position Statement”.
- The local authority has noted that Biv contains a typo – Policy HLL4 should be HLL5.
- The local authority has suggested amendment to elements Bviii and ix to add ‘significant’ to “environmental harm” and replace “approved” with ‘for approval’.

- In elements Bxi and xii it is unclear where is it expected that “current standing advice” will be accessed.
- Element Bxiv is assumed to refer to ‘vehicle’ electric charging points. And the local authority has suggested the addition of ‘relevant Supplementary Planning Documents’.

The Qualifying Body accepted the need for amendments and their responses have helped to inform the recommendations.

Recommendation 4:

4.1 Within “Policy HLL2 Housing Development”:

4.1.1 In element A (and also in paragraph 5.7) amend “south” with ‘north’.

4.1.2 In element Bi delete “developable”.

4.1.3 In element Bii add ‘MKCC’s’ before “First Homes Policy”.

4.1.4 In elements Biii and Biv delete “full”; and in Biv replace “HLL4” with ‘HLL5’.

4.1.5 In element Bviii add ‘significant’ to “environmental harm” and in Bviii and also Bix replace “approved” with ‘for approval’.

4.1.6 In element Bxi and also Bxii replace “in accordance with current standing advice” with ‘to the satisfaction of the local planning authority’.

4.1.7 In element Bxiv add ‘vehicle’ in front of “electric charging” and at the end add ‘and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents’.

4.2 At paragraph 5.7 add a reference to ‘Appendix A: Site at Haversham Design Proposals’, formed from Appendix C

(www.havershamltlinford.org/_files/ugd/8c6ec7_0ee8dea123434a56944baa83fc357ad1.pdf) - retitled after the deletion, below, of the original Appendix A - to which should be added the drainage proposals provided with the Qualifying Body’s email dated 30th March 2023.

As amended Policy HLL2 meets the Basic Conditions.

POLICY HLL3: FIRST HOMES EXCEPTION SITES

The context for the First Homes Policy is appropriately explained in the supporting text. I note that this Policy says “No other proposal for a First Homes Exception Site has been approved or implemented in the plan period”. The need for this constraint seems to arise because the opening sentence invites multiple schemes; making the plural singular would resolve the matter.

The local authority has commented: “It is not clear how the maximum scheme size and site area has been arrived at. The key factors to consider are that development should be proportionate to the size of the settlement and should meet a demonstrable need”. The

Qualifying Body has explained: “The approach in defining a gross site area is to respond to the provision made by Planning Practice Guidance to define the approach to proportionality in relation to First Homes Exception Sites. HcLLPC has adopted an approach which allows for a level of growth commensurate to the scale and character of the village which equates to approximately 5% increase in dwellings above the number of dwellings in New Haversham.” The Practice Guidance referenced says neighbourhood plans should: “set policies which specify their approach to determining the proportionality of First Homes exception site proposals, and the sorts of evidence that they might need in order to properly assess this” (Paragraph: 026 Reference ID: 70-026-20210524). I do not consider that a very specific site area and a requirement that the site be adjacent to a “main road” are the transparent criteria that the Practice Guidance encourages. Accordingly, I have recommended new wording for elements A(ii) – (iv).

The Policy refers to “a Critical Drainage Catchment area” but this is not further explained or referenced in the supporting text. The Qualifying Body has provided additional text which is the basis for my recommendation.

Recommendation 5:

5.1 Within “Policy HLL3 First Homes Exception Sites”:

5.1.1 Amend the opening sentence to read:

‘Proposals for a First Homes Exception Site at New Haversham will be supported if:’.

5.1.2 From element (i) delete “of New Haversham”.

5.1.3 Replace elements (ii) to (iv) as:

‘(ii) The proposal meets an evidenced housing need and is proportionate in scale to the existing settlement: for New Haversham this suggests a proposal of approximately 12 dwellings enlarging the settlement by around 5%.

(iii) Vehicle and pedestrian accesses are safe and convenient, and have regard for the amenity of neighbouring residents where applicable.’

Revise subsequent numbering accordingly.

5.2 To the supporting text for Policy HLL3 add a new paragraph as follows:

‘5.12 Parts of the Parish are within a Critical Drainage Catchment (CDC), as defined by the Milton Keynes Surface Water Management Plan 2016. As per Plan:MK Policy FR1, all sites within a CDC, will be expected to show that the development would not increase the CDC’s flood risk and, if possible, will improve the current situation.’

Revise subsequent paragraph numbering accordingly.

As amended Policy HLL3 meets the Basic Conditions.

POLICY HLL4: ZERO CARBON BUILDINGS

As noted earlier, the Basic Conditions require that a Neighbourhood Plan must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;

- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Plan for the area.

Whilst it is evidently the intent that Policy HLL4 should “contribute to the achievement of sustainable development”, and that is explained at some length in the related Appendix A, I found no clarity, either within the Plan or the related Basic Conditions Statement, as to what demonstrated “regard to national policies and advice” or “general conformity with the strategic policies” of the Plan:MK. In particular I was concerned that the Policy requires additions to the National and Local List of Planning Application Requirements; it is not open to Neighbourhood Plans to do that, they must address land use matters.

I noted to the Qualifying Body that the Government’s policy approach to the energy performance of buildings, ever since the 2015 Written Ministerial Statement and the Planning & Energy Act 2008, has consistently been that the required standards (and optional standards where applicable) will be set through the Building Regulations and not through the planning system. There is already a pathway for the Building Regulations to become more demanding. Whilst there is nothing to stop Neighbourhood Plans encouraging higher standards – and Qualifying Bodies engaging with land interests to encourage their delivery – requirements are presently set at a national level through the Building Regulations.

The Qualifying Body responded that “policy [HLL4] does not set an energy efficiency standard” but “simply provides an incentive at Clause C for developments to choose a higher energy efficient standard. Where it does choose that higher standard, the policy acknowledges that there may sometimes be a trade-off between its objectives and local design policy and guidance. Although meeting these standards ought not to compromise a scheme fitting in with the character of a local area, on occasions this may be the case”. This in turn raised concerns about whether the Policy has appropriate regard to NPPF expectations on housing design, the content relating to that having recently been strengthened.

Looking at the Policy in detail, paragraph A seems uncontentious as an ambition, and it accords with Plan:MK Policy SC1 and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance on “Renewable and low carbon energy” (www.gov.uk/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy). However, as the Qualifying Body has recognised, the expectation at this juncture ought to be a ‘should’ rather than a “must”.

Contrary to what the Qualifying Body argues, to my reading paragraph B seeks to set an energy performance standard, as “a space heating demand of less than 15KWh/m²/year” which, it is suggested, can be met using the Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) or equivalent design methodology. It is suggested that this is a legitimate approach since “Land values in the area are high relative to build costs and ought to be sufficient to ensure requirements to tackle improving energy and carbon performance are viable”, but this assertion is not supported with evidence. Despite the lack of evidence, it is further asserted that “Scheme viability will not therefore be acceptable as a reason for not using the Standard, unless the applicant can demonstrate the scheme has abnormal costs to

accommodate”. NPPF paragraph 31 requires that “The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence”. Further, paragraph B says, without establishing why design parameters might need to change, “the use of terraced and/or apartment building forms of plot size, plot coverage and layout that are different to those of the character area within which the proposal is located, this will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated that the scheme will not have a significant harmful effect on the character area.” This suggests that harm will be acceptable but “significant” harm will not. But no guidance is provided on what might distinguish “significant” harm. The NPPF paragraph 16d requires “policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals”.

Paragraphs C & D relate to the technical standards which are not appropriate. Paragraph E might be said to be in support of paragraph A, and in accord with Plan:MK Policy SC1, if appropriately expressed. My recommendations will therefore follow that approach.

Recommendation 6:

6.1 Within “Policy HLL4 Zero Carbon Buildings”:

6.1.1 In paragraph A replace “must” with ‘should’.

6.1.2 Replace paragraph B with: ‘Development proposals are encouraged to use the Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) or equivalent design methodology for all buildings where it is feasible to do so.’

6.1.3 Delete paragraphs C & D and move paragraph E into the supporting text as below.

6.2 Within the supporting text for Policy HLL4:

6.2.1 Delete paragraphs 5.12 & 5.13 (including Appendix A) and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly.

6.2.2 In paragraph 5.14 replace “requires” with ‘expects’.

6.2.3 Replace paragraph 5.15 as follows:

‘Clause B encourages all schemes, no matter what their intended use or size (other than householder extensions), to use the Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP)¹ [provide a related source reference footnote] or equivalent design methodology for all buildings. It is acknowledged that it may not be feasible to do so on some sites or schemes for practical reasons, which should be explained in the application.’

6.2.4 Replace paragraphs 5.16 – 5.21 (and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly) with what was Clause E of the Policy amended to delete “be submitted to”.

6.2.5 Delete the second and third sentences of paragraph 5.22.

As amended Policy HLL4 meets the Basic Conditions.

POLICY HLL5: HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

Whilst neighbourhood level attention to design matters is appropriate, the NPPF (para 128) says of design guidance: “Their geographic coverage, level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety.” Expectations that buildings will always be of 1 or 2 storeys and that extensions must ‘match’ and ‘conform’ with adjacent buildings may be considered over-prescriptive. A representation comments “It may not be possible to do former farm building conversions from the materials and design matching the existing building”, and indeed it may not be appropriate. Given the Plan’s support for energy-efficient design, the NPPF (para 134) lends support for “outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.” A representation has urged: “Make design quality guidance more Haversham specific and more robust.”

The Qualifying Body responded that “HcLLPC is satisfied that the suite of policies in the HcLLNP, alongside existing national and strategic policy provisions, considers and requires schemes to respond to important design requirements, for example Policy HLL8 and HLL9 on how ‘links to paths’ should be accommodated and Policy HLL10 on how ‘views to the countryside’ should be considered.” Whilst I agree with this approach it does perhaps further question the value of Policy HLL5 that takes a generic approach to design. The Qualifying Body has however suggested revised Policy wording which is the basis for my recommendation.

Recommendation 7:

7.1 Within “Policy HLL5 High Quality Design”:

7.1.1 Add an additional opening paragraph as follows:

‘A. Development proposals should acknowledge and respond to the Neighbourhood Character Appraisal, attached as Appendix B.’ Retitle subsequent paragraphs accordingly.

7.1.2 From the paragraph now retitled ‘B’, delete “as follows” and the subsequent content up to the paragraph now titled “C”.

7.2 Create a new Appendix from the Neighbourhood Character Appraisal, titled Appendix B.

As amended Policy HLL5 meets the Basic Conditions.

POLICY HLL6: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

A representation comments at some length on the proposed identification of a Special Character Area at Old Haversham: “We consider that Policy HLL6 in its current form fails to comply with the various key paragraphs of the Framework and PPG. The basis of the policy

and the designation in Old Haversham fails to meet basic conditions as required by the Act. The evidence needed to support a neighbourhood plan is clear in the guidance and while there are prescribed documents that must be submitted with a Neighbourhood Plan or Order there is no 'tick box' list of evidence required for neighbourhood planning. Proportionate, robust evidence should 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 or the proposals in an Order. A local planning authority should share relevant evidence, including that gathered to support its own plan-making, with a qualifying body." The suggestion is that the supporting evidence doesn't justify the blanket identification of an area with, it is suggested, allegedly precise boundaries as a non-designated heritage asset. Following my visit to the Area I reminded the Qualifying Body of the need to identify "proportionate evidence" (Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph 40 (ID 41-040-20160211)) and for this to justify the proposal. I particularly noted a potential confusion between a heritage asset and its 'setting'. The Historic England publication "The Setting of Heritage Assets" includes the explanation (paragraph 9): "Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated [in its own right] ... Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance". The details for the Haversham Mill Special Character Area provided by the Qualifying Body say "the site of the demolished old mill at Haversham (bottom of Mill Road). Including the mill race; wharf and mill house"; whilst it is difficult to appreciate the extent of these from the map because of the overlays, it is apparent that substantial areas of open ground are encompassed, the boundary to which is not evident or 'readable' on the ground. The heritage assets are the interrelated features listed; their setting is not. The Old Haversham Special Character Area is, at its core, a collection of already listed buildings (excluding the Manor Farm) but it had not been explained to me why the linking spaces have any particular merit, other than as setting (the northern boundary at one point appears to separate the garden from a related house). The old School is the only building of individual merit not already listed. To justify the proposed Area of Special Character a specific appraisal would have been required, otherwise the boundary must be tightly drawn around the buildings of merit; I sketched an illustrative map for this approach. The Qualifying Body acknowledged "The suggested boundary continues to capture the important value of this area identified in the evidence base. The Parish Council therefore agrees with the examiner's proposition on amending the proposed area."

Although I note the Plan is provided for information, a representation challenges the accuracy of the map on page 32 (the representation identifies this as Map F but the document shows it as Map H): "The plan showing the extent of Archaeological Notification Sites does not match those produce by English Heritage. As such we are unsure where the evidence for this plan comes from. If you look at DEFRA's Magic Maps and on English Natures Historical maps there are no known archaeological sites on the land owned by TM Paton and Sons. As such the plan should be redrawn." The local authority and the Qualifying Body have explained: "Plan H of the HcLLNP is a copy of the helpful interactive online mapping system MKCC operates <https://mapping.milton-keynes.gov.uk> and is considered to be accurate. It shows potential archaeological sites as identified by the Council, based on information from the Historic Environment Record. Identification of

these sites is used as an alert, that heritage assets of archaeological interest may be present. Plan:MK Policy HE1(I) states that “Proposals will be accompanied by an appropriate desk-based assessment and field evaluation where development is proposed affecting an unscheduled site of known archaeological interest or with the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest.” Accordingly, provided the map source is defined, I conclude that it is helpful content.

Recommendation 8:

8.1 Within Policy HLL6 Non-designated Heritage Assets:

8.1.1 Amend Ai to read ‘Building group at Old Haversham’ and Aii as ‘Haversham Mill’.

8.1.2 Add to B, between “within” and “a”, ‘or significantly affecting’.

8.2 In the supporting text to Policy HLL6:

8.2.1 In paragraph 5.30 replace “many which are not” with ‘one which is not’.

8.2.2 In paragraph 5.31 replace “It covers an area” with ‘The location is’.

8.3 Add a full source reference for Plan H.

8.4 Amend the related Policies Maps to:

8.4.1 Add a Haversham Mill inset map showing the Area of Special Character as the site of the demolished old mill, the mill race, wharf and mill house only.

8.4.2 Amend the boundary of the Haversham Area of Special Character to hug the existing listed buildings and the old School in the manner illustrated with my email dated 21st March 2023.

As amended Policy HLL6 meets the Basic Conditions.

POLICY HLL7: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Following my visit to the Area I was able to confirm that the proposed green spaces meet the NPPF criteria for designation as Local Green Spaces. However, the key to the New Haversham Inset Policies Map has wrongly identified Policy numbers – eg Local Green Spaces are shown as HLL6 – and so that needs correction.

Policy HLL7 meets the Basic Conditions.

Recommendation 9:

Correct Policies Inset Map 1 New Haversham to show the correct Policy numbers.

POLICY HLL8: WALKING, CYCLING AND EQUESTRIAN ROUTES

Footpaths and bridleways are protected by other routes than Neighbourhood Plans and therefore, arguably, they should not be part of this Plan’s Policies Maps. However, I can see that their location is significant to the intent of elements 2 & 3 in Policy HLL8. I note that

the Policies Maps acknowledge “existing” in their keys. Element 1 of this Policy is a statement rather than a policy.

Although ‘aspirations’ outside of the Policy are essentially beyond the scope of the Examination, I note that a representation comments: “The short term aspirations put forward by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering [Group] regarding removing stiles and providing accessible gates on the Mill Road to Little Lane footpath goes through land which is grazed by our beef cattle, as such having accessible gates are not ideal as pedestrians using footpaths often leave the gates open this is a footpath and not a bridlepath.” Further comments include “We have already made previous representations to state we do not support these new footpaths on our land”. The Qualifying Body has explained “Paragraph 5.39 of the HcLLNP recognises that there remain matters to resolve in realising opportunities to enhance the existing network, including working with landowners”.

Recommendation 10:

Within “Policy HLL8 Walking, Cycling and Equestrian Routes”:

10.1 Move paragraph A to become a new paragraph 5.37 (and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly); amend the wording to replace “protecting” with ‘recognising’.

10.2 Redesignate paragraphs B & C as A & B and amend the new paragraph A by replacing “network” with ‘network of walking, cycling and equestrian routes’.

As amended Policy HLL8 meets the Basic Conditions.

POLICY HLL9: GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

It is appropriate that the Neighbourhood Plan “refines Plan:MK Policy NE4” by identifying the relevant features locally. However, the value of these spaces will be open to serious challenge without clarity as to how the spaces have been identified and evaluated. It cannot be said that the Plan “designates” a Green and Blue Infrastructure Network. As the text says more realistically, it locates “the presence of Green and Blue Infrastructure assets in the parish”. The related Policies Maps say that the network elements are “existing”.

No methodology is provided for the identification and separation of significant open space, or already recognised spaces, from open space in general. A representation consequently comments: “whilst we agree that the integrity of the Network should be maintained and improved (as Part B sets out) we do not consider that it is appropriate to resist proposals that would result in the loss of land within the Network when there is no apparent basis for the identification of land to be included in the Network and the land in question may not contribute towards the Network’s integrity.” Another representation comments: “Certain developments are allowed within Plan MK Linear Parks relating to tourism and leisure. As HLL9 policy C should be amended to allow such developments, otherwise it conflicts with Plan MK”. There is therefore a requirement for some adjustment to wording.

Within the supporting text, but not the Policy itself, there is reference to “opportunity for a new wildlife corridor as an extension to the Wildlife Corridors already designated [unreferenced] along the railway line and the River Ouse valley”. The owner of Linford Wood indicates they have never been consulted about this proposal, but I note that this is not a Neighbourhood Plan initiative but undertaken by a third party.

Recommendation 11:

11.1 Within “Policy HLL9 Green and Blue Infrastructure”:

11.1.1 Move paragraph A to become a new paragraph 5.41 (and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly); amend the wording to replace “designates” with ‘recognises’, replace “for the purpose of providing” with ‘as’, and replace the last sentence with: ‘The Network comprises Local Green Spaces, as defined by Policy HLL7, Linear Parks and Nature Reserves as defined by Plan:MK, woodlands, rivers, streams, lakes, other water bodies and land of biodiversity value as defined by Natural England¹, and the existing network of footpaths and bridleways as identified for Policy HLL8.’ Provide the relevant source reference footnote for Natural England.

11.1.2 Redesignate paragraphs B & C as A & B and amend the new paragraph A by replacing “Network” with ‘Green and Blue Infrastructure Network as shown on the Policies Map’ and replace “are required to have full regard to maintaining and improving” with ‘should maintain and improve’.

11.1.3 Amend the new paragraph B by replacing the first sentence with: ‘Proposals that would undermine the integrity of the Network will not be supported unless other material considerations outweigh the harm to the Network.’

11.2 Reduce the existing paragraph 5.41 to: ‘The Policy refines Plan:MK Policy NE4. Its purpose is linked with the vision and principles of Green Infrastructure in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes (<https://bucksmknep.co.uk/projects/vision-and-principles-for-the-improvement-of-green-infrastructure/>) by defining a network of green infrastructure assets in the neighbourhood plan area. It also responds to the location of the parish in Ouse Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy Area (<https://bucksmknep.co.uk/projects/gi-opportunities-mapping/?location=zone08>), especially its promotion of habitat creation and linkage.’

11.3 In paragraph 5.44 provide the source reference for the “Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust Core and Recovery Zone in their Nature Recovery Network”: www.bbwt.org.uk/nature-recovery-map

As amended Policy HLL9 meets the Basic Conditions.

¹ Land of biodiversity value in Haversham are identified as Priority Habitats here <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx>

POLICY HLL10: IMPORTANT VIEWS

I note in the supporting text it is said “The policy does not seek to prevent any development lying within a view but requires that proposals recognise and take account of these in their design” – but that does not actually accord with the wording of the Policy. Given that a significant number of factors will be taken in combination to assess any development proposal, it is not realistic to suggest that “Development proposals which would have a significant adverse impact on an Important View *will not be permitted*” [my emphasis added]. Potentially harmful impacts can often be mitigated by care with location, or design, and those are the types of factors that can make a new development acceptable, even though it is visible in the landscape.

The Qualifying Body responded: “HcLLPC recognises that harmful impacts can be mitigated by care with location, or design, as does Plan:MK Policy NE5 on Conserving and Enhancing Landscape Character..... It should be noted that the updated 2022 Milton Keynes Landscape Character Assessment was published following the submission of the HcLLNP and that significant components of the landscape which are identified as key characteristics in the 2016 Milton Keynes Landscape Character Assessment have continued to be identified in the updated 2022 Milton Keynes Landscape Character Assessment HcLLPC recognises that it may be considered that the evidence document needs to be included as an appendix to the HcLLNP and would therefore have no objection to a modification in this regard”. This response provides the basis of my recommendations below.

I note that the evaluation of views is one of the submitted documents, presumably because this might allow a prospective developer to identify what is valued about any individual view. However, a representation is critical of the helpfulness/wording of several of the view evaluations: “the evidence base should be revised to remove views which include detracting features identified in the published character assessment; or where reliance is placed on the degraded condition of features which actually require maintenance and restoration, as also set out in the published character assessment”. Having assessed the content of the evaluation document I feel that it is proportionate to the Policy, after amendment as above, and is appropriate as an Appendix to the Plan.

Recommendation 12:

12.1 Reword “Policy HLL10 Important Views” as follows:

‘Development proposals should conserve, and where possible enhance, the local character of the landscape, as identified in Appendix C and the 2022 Milton Keynes Landscape Character Assessment and, through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures, not cause adverse impacts on the Important Views identified on the Policies Maps.’

12.2 Amend both paragraph 5.45 and the title of Table A to reference the new ‘Appendix C Important Views’ formed from the document titled “Supporting evidence for Policy HLL10 Important Views”.

As amended Policy HLL10 meets the Basic Conditions.

POLICY HLL11: LOCAL COMMUNITY USES AND PUBLIC HOUSES

This Policy appropriately identifies local community buildings within the Neighbourhood Area for the application of Plan:MK policies. However, as noted in the supporting text, not all use changes will require a planning consent and therefore the Policy wording needs to acknowledge that. Since the identified Local Green Spaces will have been designated elsewhere in the Plan for a particular type of protection they should not be duplicated here – the remaining facilities are buildings. The local authority has also noted: “The policy shouldn’t rely on criteria from policies in another Plan (i.e. Plan:MK). Clause B of the policy should set out relevant exceptions for when change of use of community facilities would be acceptable.” The Qualifying Body acknowledged that these changes were needed.

Recommendation 13:

13.1 Bring the title of Policy HLL11 in line with the Policies Maps: ‘Local Community Facilities and Public Houses’

13.2 Reword “Policy HLL11 Local Community Uses and Public Houses” as follows: ‘Development proposals requiring a planning consent which would involve the loss of any community facility identified on the Policies Maps will be supported only if:

- i) There is no longer a need for the facility for any type of community use, and this has been robustly evidenced by research and consultation; or*
- ii) An acceptable alternative facility can be provided elsewhere.’*

13.3 Amend paragraph 5.47 to remove the opening sentence and amend the Policies Maps to remove the double identification of Local Green Spaces.

As amended Policy HLL11 meets the Basic Conditions.

POLICY HLL12: MANAGING ROAD SAFETY

Since traffic management measures normally don’t require a planning consent, these are difficult matters for a Neighbourhood Plan to influence. The local authority has also noted: “A development proposal cannot be required to go beyond mitigating its own harm and impacts.” The Policy will therefore be applicable in very limited circumstances. In my estimation, the two elements of this Policy say the same thing in two separate sets of words and the Qualifying Body agreed they should be combined.

Recommendation 14:

Amend “Policy HLL12 Managing Road Safety” to read as follows: ‘Save for householder applications, development proposals should address and ensure highway safety as is necessary to mitigate their traffic impacts.’

As amended Policy HLL12 meets the Basic Conditions.

6. Implementation

No comments.

Policies Maps and Insets

The maps appear to have helpful keys readily relating back to the related Policy content but, as noted above, the key to the New Haversham Inset Map needs correction.

Appendices

To summarise:

Appendix A has been deleted. The revised Appendix C 'Site at Haversham: Design Proposals' becomes Appendix A. A new Appendix B "Neighbourhood Character Appraisals" has been created from existing material, as has a new Appendix C "Important Views".

European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) Obligations

A further Basic Condition, which the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan must meet, is compatibility with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations.

There is no legal requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan to have a sustainability appraisal. The "Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement [and] Appropriate Assessment Screening" (January 2022) carried out by Milton Keynes City Council considered whether or not the content of the Plan required a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plan and Programmes Regulations 2004. In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, the Council concluded: "Historic England have advised that SEA is merited in this case for the limited reason of the plan's potential for likely significant environmental effects for sites with potential for remains of archaeological interest which may comprise previously unidentified heritage assets. It is therefore the opinion of Milton Keynes Council that overall the Plan will have significant effects on the environment and that the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan does need to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment." In relation to the legal protection afforded to habitats and species of European importance through Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna - known as the 'Habitats Directive' – the Screening concluded: "Given the role of Neighbourhood Plans and the scale of development likely to be proposed in the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that Appropriate Assessment of the plan is not required".

Because of the conclusion that a Strategic Environmental Assessment was required, Milton Keynes City Council carried out a "Haversham cum Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report" in February 2022. This Report concluded: "The key issues arising out of the analysis of baseline data ..., and the review of relevant plans, have been used to identify objectives against which options for the Neighbourhood Plan and site allocations within it can be tested. The objective against

which options for site allocations should be tested is: To assess the potential to harm a heritage asset or its setting”. Historic England and other statutory consultees agreed that this was the appropriate approach. Therefore the “Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Draft Environmental Report (February 2022) was produced and used within the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation. This Report concluded: “The preferred approach presented by the draft Plan does not lead to any significant negative effects. Any potential effects to the historic environment by the allocating of Land south [sic] of 27 High Street, Old Haversham have been mitigated in policy HLL2 by requiring a pre-application archaeological assessment. At this stage, one recommendation is made to mitigate the adverse effects of implementing the Plan. This is: Include an objective within the Plan to protect the parish’s historic assets, including sites of archaeological significance.” The recommendation was subsequently acted upon and the final SEA Assessment Report (July 2022) concluded: “The preferred approach presented by the Plan does not lead to any significant negative effects. Any potential effects to the historic environment by the allocating of Land south [sic] of 27 High Street, Old Haversham have been mitigated in policy HLL2 by requiring a pre-application archaeological assessment.”

Particularly in the absence of any adverse comments from the statutory bodies or the Local Planning Authority (either at the Regulation 14 or the Regulation 16 Consultations) I can confirm that the Assessments undertaken were appropriate and proportionate, and that the Plan has sustainability at its heart.

In regard to the European Convention on Human Rights, the Basic Conditions Statement that accompanies the Neighbourhood Plan states: “The Parish Council has been mindful of the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights in [the] process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan and considers that it complies with the Human Rights Act. The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to extensive engagement with those people local to the area who could be affected by its policies and their views have been taken into account in finalising the Plan.” No evidence has arisen or been put forward to demonstrate that this is not the case.

Taking all of the above into account, I am satisfied that the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with EU obligations and that it does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with, the ECHR.

Conclusions

This Independent Examiner's Report recommends a range of modifications to the Policies, as well as some of the supporting content, in the Plan. Modifications have been recommended to effect corrections, to ensure clarity and in order to ensure that the Basic Conditions are met. Whilst I have proposed a significant number of modifications, the Plan itself remains fundamentally unchanged in the role and direction set for it by the Qualifying Body.

I therefore conclude that, subject to the modifications recommended, the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan:

- has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Plan for the area;
- is compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations;
- does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017(d).

On that basis I *recommend* to Milton Keynes City Council that, subject to the incorporation of modifications set out as recommendations in this report, it is appropriate for the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to referendum.

Referendum Area

As noted earlier, part of my Examiner role is to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Plan area. I consider the Neighbourhood Area to be appropriate and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore ***recommend*** that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the Neighbourhood Area as approved by Milton Keynes City Council on 8th February 2017.

Recommendations: (this is a listing of the recommendations exactly as they are included in the Report)

Rec	Text	Reason
1	<p>1.1 Consistently ensure that references to ‘Milton Keynes Council’ or ‘MKC’ are updated and changed to ‘Milton Keynes City Council’ or ‘MKCC’.</p> <p>1.2 Amend the front cover to replace “2016-2031” with ‘2022-2031’ and to remove “Submission version”.</p> <p>1.3 Within the “Foreword” replace “inspector” with ‘Examiner’.</p> <p>1.4 Review the Contents page in the light of the recommendations in this Report.</p>	For clarity and accuracy
2	<p>Under the heading “2. The Neighbourhood Area”:</p> <p>2.1 Amend the opening of paragraph 2.2 to read: “The Ouse Valley is designated as a Linear Park that runs along the edges of the city and separates it from the parish (see Plan B on page 7) and, although not contiguous, there is also a designated Wildlife Corridor”; also add to the end of the paragraph: ‘(paragraph 12.11 of Plan:MK)’.</p> <p>2.2 Replace Plan B with the relevant Linear Park detail from the Plan:MK Policy Maps with the Neighbourhood Area boundary overlaid; provide a hyperlinked reference to the source maps.</p> <p>2.3 Replace Plan C with the flood risk map publicly available on the Government website and, if possible, overlay the Neighbourhood Area boundary: https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map?eastings=483438&northings=241704&map=SurfaceWater; reference the source.</p>	For clarity and accuracy
3	<p>Under the heading “3. Planning Policy Context”:</p> <p>3.1 Replace paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8 as follows: ‘3.7 Additionally, Policy DS1 of Plan:MK defines Haversham as ‘Villages and rural settlements’ where the approach to delivering new development places emphasis on neighbourhood plans. During the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan, MKCC confirmed in a briefing note (link) that Plan:MK requires no further housing site allocations to be made in Haversham to 2031 but assumes that, across the whole Milton Keynes area, 35 dwellings per annum in the rural area will come forward as ‘windfall schemes’ (see Table 4.4 in the adopted Plan:MK Housing Supply). The briefing note also confirmed that MKCC has issued an indicative housing requirement</p>	For clarity and accuracy

	<p>figure of 1 to rural parishes. There have been no subsequent changes to MKCC’s adopted formal position on this matter.</p> <p>3.8 However, a review of Plan:MK is currently in its early stages. A consultation on the ambition and objectives of The New City Plan concluded in March 2023 and the Parish Council will continue to engage in this process. The adopted MK Futures 2050 Strategy is a non-statutory framework for the longer-term spatial development of Milton Keynes which will inform the Plan:MK Review. The Strategy indicates that significant further growth is planned for Milton Keynes. Although expansion to the north into the Parish is likely to be very limited (given the environmental and landscape sensitivities and constraints, green infrastructure and water management function), as recognised at ‘Discounted Options’ on page 74 of the Milton Keynes Strategy for 2050 (link), the Parish Council is mindful of the provisions of §14 of the NPPF (link) in respect of securing some protection for the Parish.’</p> <p>The links included above are as follows:</p> <p>https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/about-neighbourhood-planning</p> <p>https://www.mkfutures2050.com</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf</p> <p>3.2 Add the Neighbourhood Area boundary to Plan D.</p>	
4	<p>4.1 Within “Policy HLL2 Housing Development”:</p> <p>4.1.1 In element A (and also in paragraph 5.7) amend “south” with ‘north’.</p> <p>4.1.2 In element Bi delete “developable”.</p> <p>4.1.3 In element Bii add ‘MKCC’s’ before “First Homes Policy”.</p> <p>4.1.4 In elements Biii and Biv delete “full”; and in Biv replace “HLL4” with ‘HLL5’.</p> <p>4.1.5 In element Bviii add ‘significant’ to “environmental harm” and in Bviii and also Bix replace “approved” with ‘for approval’.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1

	<p>4.1.6 In element Bxi and also Bxii replace “in accordance with current standing advice” with ‘to the satisfaction of the local planning authority’.</p> <p>4.1.7 In element Bxiv add ‘vehicle’ in front of “electric charging” and at the end add ‘and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents’.</p> <p>4.2 At paragraph 5.7 add a reference to ‘Appendix A: Site at Haversham Design Proposals’, formed from Appendix C (www.havershamltlinford.org/_files/ugd/8c6ec7_0ee8dea123434a56944baa83fc357ad1.pdf) - retitled after the deletion, below, of the original Appendix A - to which should be added the drainage proposals provided with the Qualifying Body’s email dated 30th March 2023.</p>	
5	<p>5.1 Within “Policy HLL3 First Homes Exception Sites”:</p> <p>5.1.1 Amend the opening sentence to read: ‘Proposals for a First Homes Exception Site at New Haversham will be supported if:’.</p> <p>5.1.2 From element (i) delete “of New Haversham”.</p> <p>5.1.3 Replace elements (ii) to (iv) as: ‘(ii) The proposal meets an evidenced housing need and is proportionate in scale to the existing settlement: for New Haversham this suggests a proposal of approximately 12 dwellings enlarging the settlement by around 5%.</p> <p>(iii) Vehicle and pedestrian accesses are safe and convenient, and have regard for the amenity of neighbouring residents where applicable.’</p> <p>Revise subsequent numbering accordingly.</p> <p>5.2 To the supporting text for Policy HLL3 add a new paragraph as follows: ‘5.12 Parts of the Parish are within a Critical Drainage Catchment (CDC), as defined by the Milton Keynes Surface Water Management Plan 2016. As per Plan:MK Policy FR1, all sites within a CDC, will be expected to show that the development would not increase the CDC’s flood risk and, if possible, will improve the current situation.’</p> <p>Revise subsequent paragraph numbering accordingly.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1

6	<p>6.1 Within “Policy HLL4 Zero Carbon Buildings”:</p> <p>6.1.1 In paragraph A replace “must” with ‘should’.</p> <p>6.1.2 Replace paragraph B with: ‘Development proposals are encouraged to use the Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) or equivalent design methodology for all buildings where it is feasible to do so.’</p> <p>6.1.3 Delete paragraphs C & D and move paragraph E into the supporting text as below.</p> <p>6.2 Within the supporting text for Policy HLL4:</p> <p>6.2.1 Delete paragraphs 5.12 & 5.13 (including Appendix A) and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly.</p> <p>6.2.2 In paragraph 5.14 replace “requires” with ‘expects’.</p> <p>6.2.3 Replace paragraph 5.15 as follows:</p> <p>‘Clause B encourages all schemes, no matter what their intended use or size (other than householder extensions), to use the Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) 1 [provide a related source reference footnote] or equivalent design methodology for all buildings. It is acknowledged that it may not be feasible to do so on some sites or schemes for practical reasons, which should be explained in the application.’</p> <p>6.2.4 Replace paragraphs 5.16 – 5.21 (and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly) with what was Clause E of the Policy amended to delete “be submitted to”.</p> <p>6.2.5 Delete the second and third sentences of paragraph 5.22.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1
7	<p>7.1 Within “Policy HLL5 High Quality Design”:</p> <p>7.1.1 Add an additional opening paragraph as follows: ‘A. Development proposals should acknowledge and respond to the Neighbourhood Character Appraisal, attached as Appendix B.’ Retitle subsequent paragraphs accordingly.</p> <p>7.1.2 From the paragraph now retitled ‘B’, delete “as follows” and the subsequent content up to the paragraph now titled “C”.</p> <p>7.2 Create a new Appendix from the Neighbourhood Character Appraisal, titled Appendix B.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1

8	<p>8.1 Within Policy HLL6 Non-designated Heritage Assets:</p> <p>8.1.1 Amend Ai to read ‘Building group at Old Haversham’ and Aii as ‘Haversham Mill’.</p> <p>8.1.2 Add to B, between “within” and “a”, ‘or significantly affecting’.</p> <p>8.2 In the supporting text to Policy HLL6:</p> <p>8.2.1 In paragraph 5.30 replace “many which are not” with ‘one which is not’.</p> <p>8.2.2 In paragraph 5.31 replace “It covers an area” with ‘The location is’.</p> <p>8.3 Add a full source reference for Plan H.</p> <p>8.4 Amend the related Policies Maps to:</p> <p>8.4.1 Add a Haversham Mill inset map showing the Area of Special Character as the site of the demolished old mill, the mill race, wharf and mill house only.</p> <p>8.4.2 Amend the boundary of the Haversham Area of Special Character to hug the existing listed buildings and the old School in the manner illustrated with my email dated 21st March 2023.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1
9	Correct Policies Inset Map 1 New Haversham to show the correct Policy numbers.	For clarity and accuracy
10	<p>Within “Policy HLL8 Walking, Cycling and Equestrian Routes”:</p> <p>10.1 Move paragraph A to become a new paragraph 5.37 (and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly); amend the wording to replace “protecting” with ‘recognising’.</p> <p>10.2 Redesignate paragraphs B & C as A & B and amend the new paragraph A by replacing “network” with ‘network of walking, cycling and equestrian routes’.</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1
11	<p>11.1 Within “Policy HLL9 Green and Blue Infrastructure”:</p> <p>11.1.1 Move paragraph A to become a new paragraph 5.41 (and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly); amend the wording to replace “designates” with ‘recognises’, replace “for the purpose of providing” with ‘as’, and replace the last sentence with: ‘The Network comprises Local Green Spaces, as defined by Policy HLL7, Linear Parks and Nature Reserves as</p>	For clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Conditions 1 & 3

	<p>defined by Plan:MK, woodlands, rivers, streams, lakes, other water bodies and land of biodiversity value as defined by Natural England , and the existing network of footpaths and bridleways as identified for Policy HLL8.’ Provide the relevant source reference footnote for Natural England.</p> <p>11.1.2 Redesignate paragraphs B & C as A & B and amend the new paragraph A by replacing “Network” with ‘Green and Blue Infrastructure Network as shown on the Policies Map’ and replace “are required to have full regard to maintaining and improving” with ‘should maintain and improve’.</p> <p>11.1.3 Amend the new paragraph B by replacing the first sentence with: ‘Proposals that would undermine the integrity of the Network will not be supported unless other material considerations outweigh the harm to the Network.’</p> <p>11.2 Reduce the existing paragraph 5.41 to: ‘The Policy refines Plan:MK Policy NE4. Its purpose is linked with the vision and principles of Green Infrastructure in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes (https://bucksmknep.co.uk/projects/vision-and-principles-for-the-improvement-of-green-infrastructure/) by defining a network of green infrastructure assets in the neighbourhood plan area. It also responds to the location of the parish in Ouse Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy Area (https://bucksmknep.co.uk/projects/gi-opportunities-mapping/?location=zone08), especially its promotion of habitat creation and linkage.’</p> <p>11.3 In paragraph 5.44 provide the source reference for the “Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust Core and Recovery Zone in their Nature Recovery Network”: www.bbwt.org.uk/nature-recovery-map</p>	
12	<p>12.1 Reword “Policy HLL10 Important Views” as follows: ‘Development proposals should conserve, and where possible enhance, the local character of the landscape, as identified in Appendix C and the 2022 Milton Keynes Landscape Character Assessment and, through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures, not cause adverse impacts on the Important Views identified on the Policies Maps.’</p> <p>12.2 Amend both paragraph 5.45 and the title of Table A to reference the new ‘Appendix C Important Views’ formed from the document titled “Supporting evidence for Policy HLL10 Important Views”.</p>	For clarity and accuracy to meet Basic Conditions 1 & 3
13	13.1 Bring the title of Policy HLL11 in line with the Policies Maps: ‘Local Community Facilities and Public Houses’	For clarity and accuracy

	<p>13.2 Reword “Policy HLL11 Local Community Uses and Public Houses” as follows: ‘Development proposals requiring a planning consent which would involve the loss of any community facility identified on the Policies Maps will be supported only if:</p> <p>i) There is no longer a need for the facility for any type of community use, and this has been robustly evidenced by research and consultation; or</p> <p>ii) An acceptable alternative facility can be provided elsewhere.’</p> <p>13.3 Amend paragraph 5.47 to remove the opening sentence and amend the Policies Maps to remove the double identification of Local Green Spaces.</p>	<p>and to meet Basic Conditions 1 & 3</p>
14	<p>Amend “Policy HLL12 Managing Road Safety” to read as follows: ‘Save for householder applications, development proposals should address and ensure highway safety as is necessary to mitigate their traffic impacts.’</p>	<p>For clarity and to meet Basic Conditions 1 & 3</p>

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**MILTON KEYNES CITY COUNCIL
HAVERSHAM-CUM-LITTLE LINFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Decision Statement - 13 September 2023

Summary

Following a referendum of residents eligible to vote within the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan area, Milton Keynes City Council will make the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan part of the Milton Keynes City Council Development Plan on 13 September 2023.

Background

Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish Council, as the qualifying body, successfully applied for its area to be designated a Neighbourhood Area, under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012). The area was designated on 8 February 2017.

The Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to Milton Keynes City Council for examination and was subsequently publicised for a six-week period, ending on 13 January 2023. All comments received were then passed to the Independent Examiner, Andrew Matheson, who submitted his report on the Plan in April 2023, stating that the plan met relevant basic conditions and requirements and should proceed to referendum.

Following the examination, Milton Keynes City Council, in consultation with Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish Council, accepted the examiner's recommendations on 16 May 2023 and proceeded to make arrangements for a referendum to be held on 20 July 2023.

The Haversham- Neighbourhood Plan was successful at the referendum held on 20 July 2023. 249 voted 'Yes' and 33 'No', turnout was 43.78%. Under the changes to Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, introduced by the Neighbourhood Planning Act, 2017, following the successful referendum the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan came into force as part of the Milton Keynes statutory development plan. The Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan must still be made by the Council within eight weeks of the referendum.

Decision

The Council makes the Haversham-cum-Little Linford Neighbourhood Plan part of the Milton Keynes City Council Development Plan.

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Delegated Decisions report



22 August 2023

PROCURING EXPERTISE TO SUPPORT OUR PLANNING SERVICE

Name of Cabinet Member	Councillor Pete Marland (Leader of the Council)
Report sponsor	Paul Thomas Director Planning and Placemaking
Report author	Sarah Evans Planning Projects and Services Manager sarah.evans@milton-keynes.gov.uk Tel 01908 253326

Exempt / confidential / not for publication	Yes - Confidential Annex
Council Plan reference	Decent affordable homes in a quality environment – well planned growth
Wards affected	All wards

Executive Summary

Milton Keynes is continuing to grow at a fast pace and the City Council, in its capacity as the local planning authority (LPA), receives a significant number of strategic and large-scale planning applications. Some applicants wish to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) to give themselves more certainty about the process of determining their proposed development.

We have recently (March 2023) published a new PPA and Pre-Application Charter to set out the level of service we want to offer. However, like most LPAs, we experience difficulties in recruiting and retaining planners with sufficient experience to manage the work associated with schemes proceeding under a PPA. Therefore, we are looking to procure access to high-quality external consultancy support, when necessary, to ensure we can deliver our key milestones in any agreement.

An Expression of Interest (EoI) exercise saw four suppliers on the ESPO Consultancy Services Framework submit an EoI for this work. To appoint from this Framework would require a mini competition to award to a single supplier.

1. Proposed Decisions

- 1.1 That the public and press be excluded from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 3 (Information relating to the Financial or Business Affairs of the Authority) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, in order that the meeting may consider the **exempt Annex** to the report.
- 1.2 That the use of the ESPO Consultancy Services Framework 664_21 to procure expertise to support our Planning Services be approved.
- 1.3 That authority be delegated to the Director of Planning and Placemaking to award a Contract under Lot 8f of the Framework, for Planning Services for a period of five years following a mini competition process.

2. Why is the Decision Needed?

- 2.1 Like many LPAs, we have experienced difficulties in recruiting and retaining planners with sufficient experience to manage the work associated with schemes proceeding under a PPA. From 2016 to-date we have entered 81 PPAs (around 9 a year). These vary in scale and complexity but have a combined financial value of circa £2.5m in fees and their delivery generates significant investment for the local economy.
- 2.2 Agreeing a PPA does not give the developer any certainty over whether their proposed development would be acceptable. It is simply a project management tool aimed at establishing the timescales for providing pre-application advice and processing the resultant planning application. Most applications would end up being determined by Planning Committee and we do not consider using a PPA where the proposal is likely, in principle, to be unacceptable.
- 2.3 We are in the process of preparing a new Local Plan (the New City Plan), which will seek to deliver on our ambitious 2050 Strategy for Growth. With the New City Plan to be submitted within the next two years, we anticipate a sharp uptake in PPA and preapplication requests. Access to suitably experienced planners through an external supplier will enable us to keep pace with the demand for PPAs and provide a high-quality professional service to our customers.

Issues

- 2.4 Difficulty in recruiting and retaining suitably experienced planners can cause delays in meeting milestones set out in a PPA agreement.

Benefits

- 2.5 Financial - the mini competition will be based on a 50:50 consideration of price and quality criteria. A Supplier will be financed from the fees levied on PPAs, which must be ringfenced specifically to support PPA casework.

- 2.6 Reputational - the supplier will be able to offer a high-quality service to our customers that meets the key milestones in the PPA agreement so that the Council can continue to provide a reliable and professional service.

3. Implications of the Decision

Financial	Y	Human rights, equalities, diversity	N
Legal	Y	Policies or Council Plan	N
Communication	N	Procurement	Y
Energy Efficiency	N	Workforce	N

(a) Financial Implications

It is estimated that the maximum value procured on the ESPO 663_21 Framework will be £2million over the 5-year contract period. Consultancy support will be paid for using the fee income from PPAs.

(b) Procurement and Legal implications

The Council has powers of general competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything which an individual may do subject to certain limitations.

The report requests approval to use the ESPO framework 664_21 - for Planning Services to award a contract for five years to the supplier who is successful in a mini competition. Procurement law recognises the use of frameworks as a legitimate route to market. The named framework is valid until 31 August 2025. The Council can award contracts under the framework during its validity as the framework is open for use by all local authorities. To remain compliant with procurement law, the process for awarding the contract and the ensuing contract must adhere to the terms of the framework.

The contract awarded under the ESPO framework will be with a consultancy, rather than an individual. Therefore, any staff supplied to us will be outside the scope of IR35.

4. Alternatives

4.1 Do Nothing

We could continue to manage the workload of PPAs solely through our own workforce, or recruiting contract staff in periods of peak demand or if there is a lack of in-house experience. This has led to the issues of missed timescales and lack of quality services described above and is not recommended.

4.2 Procure a Preferred Supplier through standard Procurement Routes such as Open Tender

This will be a much longer process and is considered unlikely to offer any additional benefit relative to the time and cost involved in the procurement process.

4.3 Set up our own Framework of Multiple Suppliers

This is not considered suitable as it would be onerous to set up, not offer anything different to that being offered by the ESPO Framework and creates operational complexities; e.g., being able to justify awarding a PPA case to one supplier over another.

5. Timetable for Implementation

Delegated Decision - 22 August 2023

Mini Competition - September 2023

Appoint Supplier (pending outcome of mini competition) - September / October 2023

List of Annexes (exempt)

Annex Maximum Value procured on the ESPO 663_21 Framework

List of Background Papers

None

Document is Restricted

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