

Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031

Basic Conditions Statement



Published by Great Horwood Parish Council under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

July 2014

Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Basic Conditions Statement

1. Introduction

1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Great Horwood Parish Council ("the Parish Council") to accompany its submission to the local planning authority, Aylesbury Vale District Council ("the District Council"), of the Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan ("the Neighbourhood Plan") under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ("the Regulations").

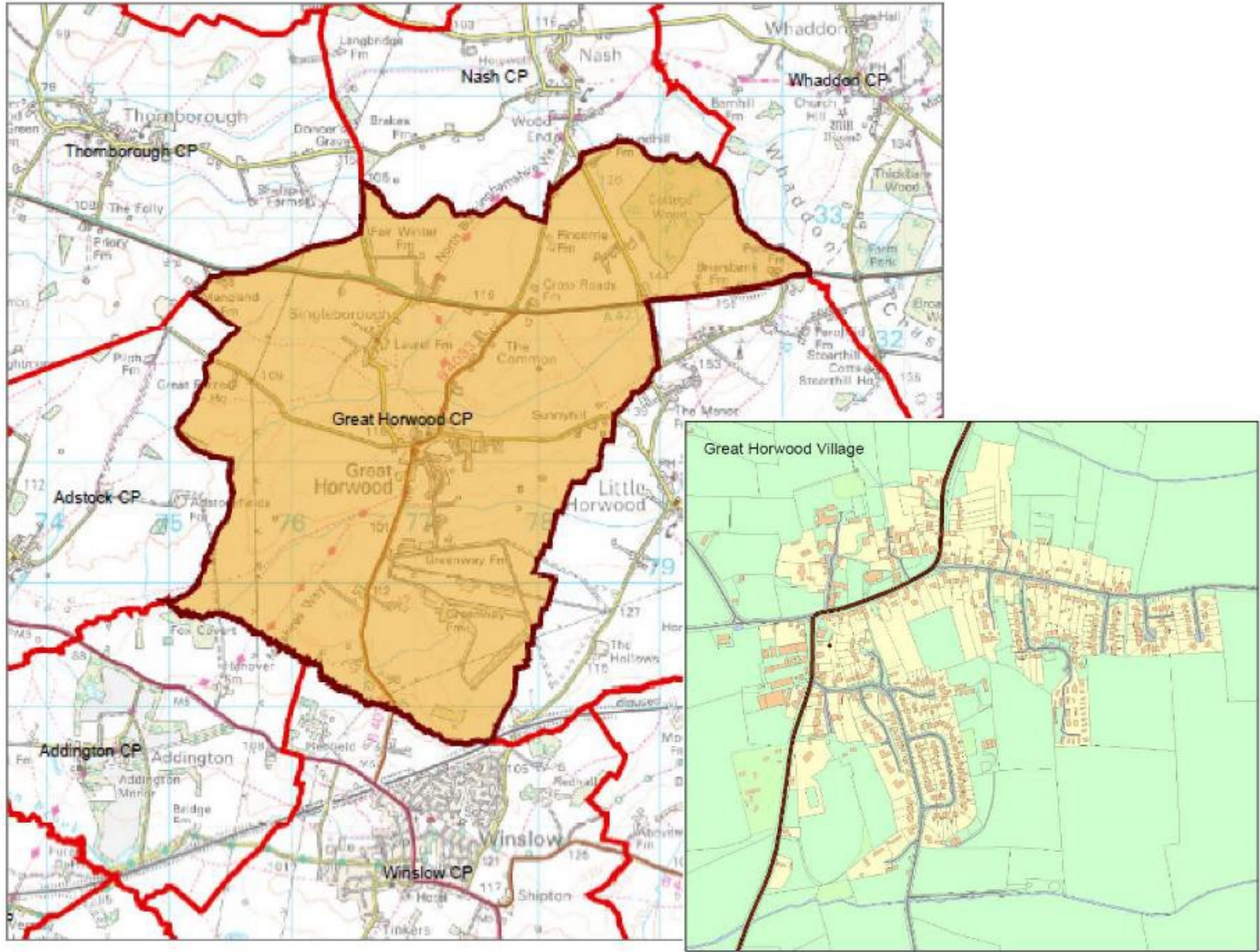
1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Parish Council, a qualifying body, for the Neighbourhood Area covering the whole of the parish of Great Horwood, as designated by Aylesbury Vale District Council on 10 September 2012.

1.3 The policies described in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the development and use of land in the designated Neighbourhood Area (see Plan A). The plan period of the Neighbourhood Plan is from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2031 and it does not contain policies relating to excluded development in accordance with the Regulations.

1.4 The Statement addresses each of the four 'basic conditions' required of the Regulations and explains how the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act.

1.5 The Regulations state that a Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the basic conditions if:

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



Plan A: Designated Neighbourhood Area & Plan of Great Horwood Village

2. Background

2.1 The plan preparation process has been led by Great Horwood Parish Council, as a 'relevant body' under the 2012 Regulations, with decisions delegated to its 'Neighbourhood Planning Team'.

2.2 The plan making process has comprised three main stages:

- State of the Parish Report (Dec 2013) – a report that summarised all the evidence on which the GHPNP is based
- Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan (April 2014) – a report that comprised the draft vision, objectives, policies, proposals and map of the plan for a six week public consultation period
- Submission Neighbourhood Plan (July 2014) – this report, which takes into account the representations received on the Pre-Submission Plan and has been modified as necessary for submission to the local planning authority; it is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal, Policies Map, a Basic Conditions Statement and a Consultation Statement.

2.3 The Parish Council has consulted the local community extensively since a Community Survey was carried out in October 2011. Groups of local residents have been established to review and agree which issues should be addressed by the plan. There have also been community surveys to obtain the fullest view of local community concerns, needs and wants from the Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

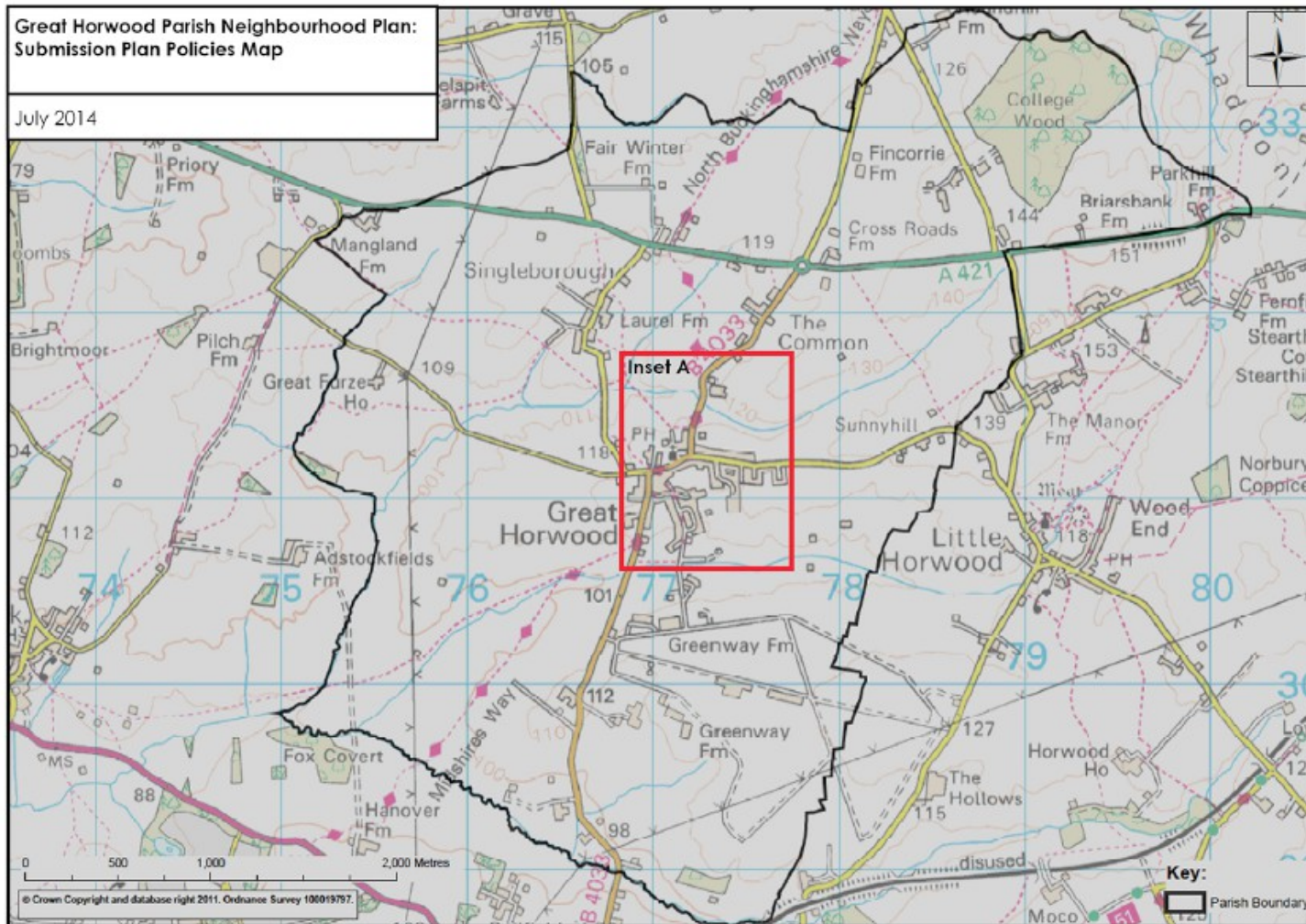
2.4 It has also worked closely with officers of AVDC since the start of the project to collate and examine the evidence base, to design and iterate policy proposals and to define the proper relationship between the Neighbourhood Plan and the 2004 Local Plan and the former Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Strategy (VAP), which has since been withdrawn from its examination. The outcome of that work is the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

2.5 The Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan, including a draft Sustainability Appraisal, was published by the Parish Council for public consultation in April 2014 in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Regulations and with the EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (as implemented by the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004). The Planning Team considered the many responses made to the plan in June 2014 and proposed that the Submission Plan be completed with minor modifications for examination.

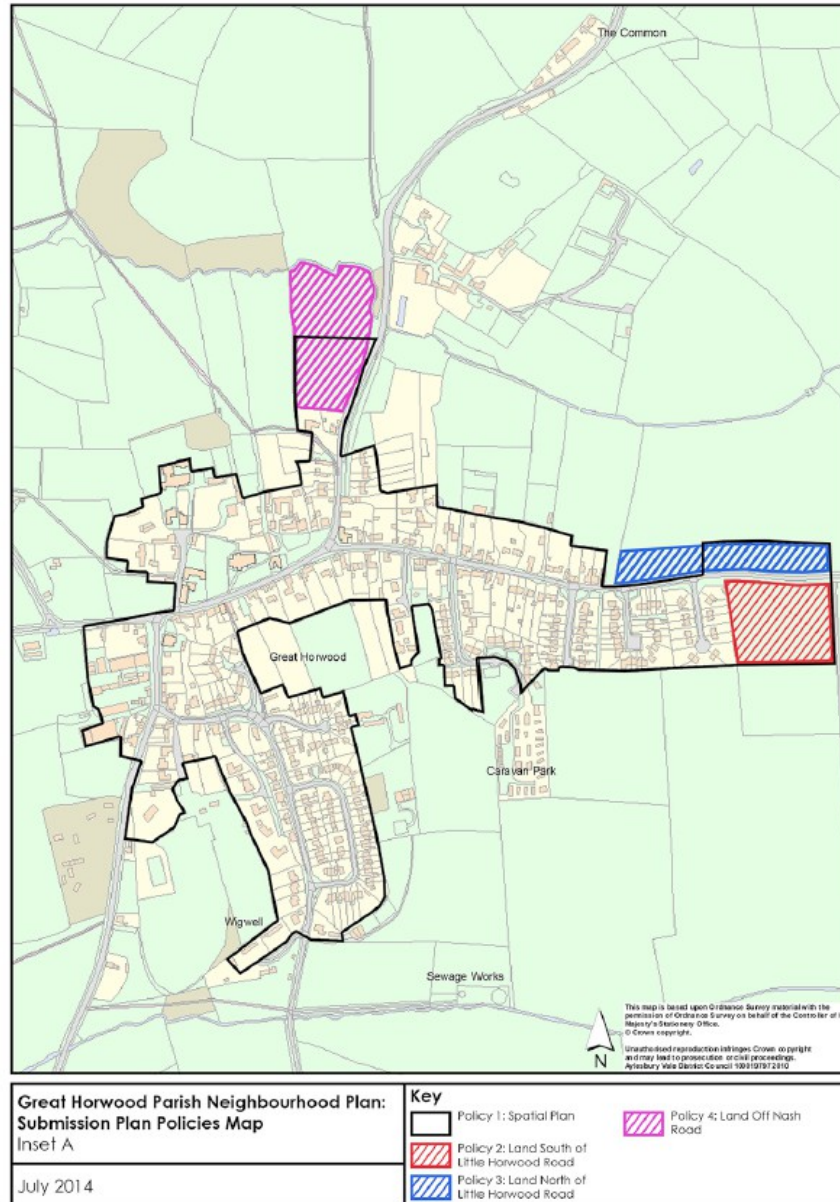
2.6 The Neighbourhood Plan includes a vision for Great Horwood Parish in fifteen years time that has sought to capture all the community's views and aspirations for the parish. It therefore forms the basis on which the strategic objectives and proposed policies of the Neighbourhood Plan have been formulated:

"The vision for Great Horwood Parish in 2031 is that it will seek to remain an independent, distinctive rural community comprising the small village of Great Horwood and the hamlet of Singleborough, conserving and enhancing its rich architectural and environmental heritage for the benefit of current villagers and for future generations. We will seek to sustain and reinforce our open social structure and mixed community, and will foster activities and facilities that enhance them. These will include the provision of affordable housing. We will work to lessen the adverse impact of road traffic on the village and will endeavour to enhance transport and other links to neighbouring communities. Overall, our aim is that residents will want to continue to live in the parish, and that others will wish they could."

2.7 The Neighbourhood Plan comprises four land use planning policies (shown on the Policies Map – see Plan C below) and one non-statutory proposal. There are no policies affecting land outside Great Horwood village (see Plan B below).



Plan B: Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map



Plan C: Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map Inset

2.8 A full Consultation Statement accompanies the Neighbourhood Plan, in accordance with Regulation 15 of the Regulations. It provides a comprehensive overview of all the consultation arrangements and outcomes during the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

2.9 The Parish Council has deliberately given the Neighbourhood Plan a tight focus on a small number of housing allocation policies that are defined on the Policies Map, as this issue is the most important to the local community. The Parish Council is satisfied that the many saved development management policies of the Local Plan and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework will continue to be relevant material considerations in determining future planning applications in the parish.

3. Conformity with National Planning Policy

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) and is mindful of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) of March 2014 in respect of formulating neighbourhood plans.

3.2 In overall terms, there are four NPPF paragraphs that provide general guidance on neighbourhood planning, to which the Neighbourhood Plan has directly responded:

Para 16

3.3 The Parish Council believes the Neighbourhood Plan is planning positively to support the strategic development needs of the district by making housing allocations, which accord with what it considers to be the proper status of Great Horwood Village in the settlement hierarchy of Aylesbury Vale (see para's 5.4 and 5.5 below).

Para 183

3.4 The Parish Council believes the Neighbourhood Plan establishes in its Section 3 a vision for the parish that reflect the desires of the local community for the place that Great Horwood can and should become. It makes the outputs of these activities real by translating them into planning policies to determine future planning applications as part of the development plan.

Para 184

3.5 The Parish Council believes the Neighbourhood Plan, as is highlighted below, is in general conformity with all the relevant saved policies of the development plan but also follows, where possible and relevant, the reasoning and evidence of the withdrawn Vale of Aylesbury Plan (see Section 5).

Para 185

3.6 The Neighbourhood Plan avoids duplicating development plan policies by focusing on site-specific policies. Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan should be easily considered alongside the development plan and any other material considerations in determining planning applications.

3.7 Set out in Table A below, is a brief summary of how each policy conforms to the NPPF. The particular paragraphs referred to in the table are those considered the most relevant to each policy but are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible relevant paragraphs.

Table A: Neighbourhood Plan & NPPF Conformity Summary

No.	GHNP Policy Title	NPPF Ref.	Commentary
1	Spatial Plan & Sustainable Development	50, 54, 74, 109, 110, 126	<p>This policy establishes and defines the Great Horwood Settlement Boundary to distinguish the consideration of planning applications within the village settlement from those outside the boundary. It does so in a way that will enable the delivery of a wide choice of high quality new homes within and adjoining the existing village (para 50) over the full plan period as part of smaller schemes that reflect the size of the village. The boundary is drawn to acknowledge the landscape character of the countryside surrounding the village and of the parish more widely (para's 109 and 110) and for that reason no boundary is drawn around the smaller hamlet of Singleborough. It has also taken into account the need to conserve and enhance the significance of the Great Horwood Conservation Area and its setting (para 126), hence the allowance for change on its eastern and northern boundaries where that objective will best be served.</p> <p>Crucially too, the policy requires affordable and custom build homes to be delivered on site, recognising that sites of 15 dwellings do not normally come forward for development, given the current minimum threshold at which the saved Local Plan affordable housing policy applies (i.e. 15 or more). In this sense, the policy follows para 54 in reflecting the importance of meeting local housing needs, both in terms of affordability and, as this size of site will suit local builders, of meeting a local demand for self-build opportunities. It also seeks to protect precious open spaces within the village from development (para 74).</p>
2	Land South of Little Horwood Road	50, 58, 61, 129	<p>This policy allocates 0.5 Ha of agricultural land for the development of 15 homes. In doing so it will contribute to meeting the demand for housing in this area (para 50) but in such a way that properly integrates the scheme into the village through the application of a series of design principles (para's 58 and 61). The policy also acknowledges the site forms part of the setting to the Conservation Area and therefore requires planning applications to demonstrate their design solutions will assess and respond to the significance of that setting (para 129).</p>

3	Land North of Little Horwood Road	50, 58, 61, 70, 129	This policy allocates 0.5 Ha of agricultural land for housing development of 15 homes and for the establishment of a new public park for the benefit of the village. In doing so it will contribute to meeting the demand for housing in this area (para 50) but in such a way that properly integrates the scheme into the village through the application of a series of design principles (para's 58 and 61). The policy also acknowledges the site forms part of the setting to the Conservation Area and therefore requires planning applications to demonstrate their design solutions will assess and respond to the significance of that setting (para 129). In this respect, the policy reflects the defined settlement boundary on the Policies Map, which excludes the land between the existing edge of the village inside the Conservation Area and that part of the site where a housing scheme is acceptable. It identifies that land as being suitable to create a new village park for the benefit of the whole community (para 70).
4	Land off Nash Road	50, 58, 61, 70, 129	This policy allocates 0.5 Ha of agricultural land for housing development of 15 homes. In doing so it will contribute to meeting the demand for housing in this area (para 50) but in such a way that properly integrates the scheme into the village through the application of a series of design principles (para's 58 and 61). The policy also acknowledges the site forms part of the setting to the Conservation Area and therefore requires planning applications to demonstrate their design solutions will assess and respond to the significance of that setting (para 129). In addition, the policy reflects the defined settlement boundary on the Policies Map, which excludes land within the site on its northern edge where a housing scheme will not be acceptable. It identifies that land as being suitable to create a new public open space for the benefit of the whole community (para 70).

4. Contribution to Sustainable Development

4.1 The District Council issued a screening opinion in February 2014 requiring a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Neighbourhood Plan under the EU Directive on SEA. The Parish Council has chosen to incorporate the SEA into a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to assess the broader economic, social and environmental effects of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.2 The conclusion of the Sustainability Appraisal is that the Neighbourhood Plan will not have any significant economic, social and environmental impacts. It assesses the policies as delivering positive sustainable outcomes when compared with the reasonable alternative policy options. In which case, it is considered the Neighbourhood Plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the parish.

4.3 The separate Sustainability Appraisal report forms part of the submission documentation for examination so its contents are not repeated here.

5. General Conformity with the Development Plan

5.1 The determination of how the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan has proven to be a challenge during its preparation. Whilst the saved policies of the 2004 Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP) have been helpful in shaping the details of the allocation policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, there is currently no up-to-date Local Plan in respect of providing a firm housing supply position.

5.2 The Vale of Aylesbury Plan (VAP) that was intended by the District Council to provide the strategic planning policy framework to 2031 was withdrawn from its examination in January 2014. The District Council has since proposed to prepare a Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) comprising strategic, development management and site allocation policies but this is not likely to be adopted until 2017 at the earliest.

5.3 To an extent, the reasoning and evidence of the VAP can still be used to inform the Neighbourhood Plan. It has therefore informed the assessment of sites in respect of those that were included in the latest Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, together with other sites submitted for consideration since. The Neighbourhood Plan has also considered the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Landscape Character Assessment reports prepared for the VAP.

5.4 However, the Parish Council has challenged this evidence base in respect of the definition of Great Horwood village as a 'large village' in the settlement hierarchy of the District. In the Neighbourhood Plan evidence base is a report providing a full critique of the District Council's 2012 Settlement Hierarchy Assessment report. It concludes that on the basis of the data in that report,

corrected for inaccuracies and updated as necessary, the village can only be defined as a 'smaller village' if the criteria determining the hierarchy are to be applied consistently.

5.5 In some respects, the precise location of the village, and the parish more generally, in that hierarchy need not be definitive. Policy 1 has chosen to formalise the settlement boundary definition and to locate it on the Policies Map. In doing so, it has enabled the Neighbourhood Plan to be positive in supporting development within the boundary, which has been drawn to allow for the housing allocations it makes. There is therefore no 'cap' placed on housing development, as 'windfall' housing schemes will continue to come forward in the village over the plan period in addition to those sites allocated. Policy 1 only places a 'cap' on the size and capacity of an individual site (i.e. no more than 15 dwellings on sites of no more than 0.5 Ha) to ensure the scale of development fits with its village context. Even if such schemes only result in perhaps 1-2 new net dwellings per annum in line with recent trends, this will still result in another 30 or more new homes over the plan period.

5.6 The nuances of 'greenfield allocation' and 'windfall' schemes and how their housing completions are classified and counted by the District Council will not be familiar to the local community and the Parish Council has borne this in mind in deciding how to strike the right balance between promoting development and securing local voters' support for the Neighbourhood Plan. The community engagement activities undertaken very clearly indicate the preference for smaller schemes, suited to local builders, that can come forward over the lifetime of the plan period rather than larger, indistinct 'housing estates' delivered in a short period. For new housing development to be welcomed by the local community, the Neighbourhood Plan must place significant importance on meeting that preference.

5.7 The 2004 AVDLP could not, of course, have anticipated the existence of the Localism Act almost a decade later and so made no provision for translating generic planning policy into a distinct parish-based plan. However, the Neighbourhood Plan policies are in general conformity with the strategic intent of that plan and its specific policies and in some cases will replace saved development management policies that are no longer relevant for parts of the parish.

Table B: Neighbourhood Plan & Development Plan Conformity Summary

No.	GHNP Policy Title	Commentary
1	Spatial Plan & Sustainable Development	<p>The policy updates and replaces saved policies RA3 (extension of residential curtilages into open countryside), RA13 (development within settlements) and RA14 (development at the edge of settlements) in so far as the village of Great Horwood is concerned. However, policy RA3 will continue to apply to the remainder of the parish. It establishes a clear settlement boundary and defining that boundary on the Policies Map. This allows the policy to offer more flexibility to the scale of housing schemes within the boundary on the one hand but provides greater protection of the countryside on the immediate village edge than do the saved policies. The means of defining the boundary are derived from the definition included in para.10.48 of the AVDLP. The policy accords with saved policy GP2 in respect of affordable housing provision and policy GP53 in respect of requiring proposals to demonstrate they have properly considered their impact on the Conservation Area.</p>
2	Land South of Little Horwood Road	<p>The policy accords with saved policy GP2 in respect of affordable housing provision and policy GP53 in respect of requiring proposals to demonstrate they have properly considered their impact on the Conservation Area. It also accords with saved policy GP24 in respect of requiring sufficient car parking provision and with the development, design, landscaping and amenity area principles of policies GP35, GP38 and GP91 respectively.</p>
3	Land North of Little Horwood Road	<p>The policy accords with saved policy GP2 in respect of affordable housing provision and policy GP53 in respect of requiring proposals to demonstrate they have properly considered their impact on the Conservation Area. It also accords with saved policy GP24 in respect of requiring sufficient car parking provision and with the development, design, landscaping and amenity area principles of policies GP35, GP38 and GP91 respectively.</p> <p>In addition, the policy accords with saved policies GP87 and GP88 as the proposed village park will be laid out and completed as part of the scheme. The land will be transferred to the Parish Council, along with a commuted sum, to secure the ongoing management of the park.</p>

4	Land off Nash Road	<p>The policy accords with saved policy GP2 in respect of affordable housing provision and policy GP53 in respect of requiring proposals to demonstrate they have properly considered their impact on the Conservation Area. It also accords with saved policy GP24 in respect of requiring sufficient car parking provision and with the development, design, landscaping and amenity area principles of policies GP35, GP38 and GP91 respectively.</p> <p>In addition, the policy accords with saved policies GP87 and GP88 as the proposed public open space will be laid out and completed as part of the scheme. The land will be transferred to the Parish Council, along with a commuted sum, to secure the ongoing management of the park. Finally, it also accords with saved policy GP59 in identifying the site as partially lying within an Archaeological Notification Area requiring provision to be made for the preservation of archaeological remains.</p>
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6. Compatibility with EU Legislation

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act.

6.2 A screening opinion was issued by AVDC on February 2014, which confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan should be prepared in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42 on strategic environmental assessment (SEA).

6.3 A SA/SEA Scoping Report was published by the Parish Council for consultation with the statutory authorities to complete Stage A of the SA/SEA process. The comments received were then taken into account in Stages B and C of drafting the SA/SEA alongside the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan, both of which were published for consultation with the statutory authorities as well as the general public. The final SA/SEA report (stage D3) is published to accompany the Submission Neighbourhood Plan.

6.4 The Neighbourhood Area is not in close proximity to any European designated nature sites so does not require an Appropriate Assessment under the EU Habitats Regulations.