

# **Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan**

**A Report to Aylesbury Vale District Council of the  
Independent Examination of the Great Horwood Parish  
Neighbourhood Plan**

**By**

**Independent Examiner**

**Julian Richard Jackson**

**BSc(Hons) DipTP DMS MRTPI**

January 2015

# Contents

	Page
<b>Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.The Development Plan</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.Basic Conditions</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4.Unaccompanied Visit and Documents</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.The Neighbourhood Area</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6.Community Engagement and Consultation</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7.Submission of the Plan</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>8.The Plan – Introductory Sections</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>9.The Plan – as a Whole</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>10.The Plan – Policies</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>11.The Plan – Implementation</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>12.Conclusion</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Appendix A – Documents taken into account in the Examination</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Appendix B – List of Recommended Modifications in Plan order</b>	<b>49</b>

## Summary

This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared over several years by Great Horwood Parish Council. The preparation process clearly involved a great deal of hard work by committed volunteers assisted by consultants' support and that of Aylesbury Vale District Council.

The Parish Council are to be commended on the quality of the Neighbourhood Plan produced and submitted for examination.

The Neighbourhood Plan focuses on housing proposals and associated public open space over a total of four policies. Great Horwood is clearly a place of significant heritage interest and local character. This is reflected in the detailed provisions set out in the policies. Great Horwood village has few services within it and limited access to services elsewhere by sustainable transport modes. Nevertheless it is appropriate that the village makes a contribution to the provision of future housing development commensurate with its settlement size and role.

On completing my examination I have recommended a number of modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan. Subject to these modifications the Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan meets the required Basic Conditions and can be submitted to referendum.

# 1.Introduction

## *What is Neighbourhood Planning?*

The Localism Act 2011 empowers local communities to prepare planning policies for designated Neighbourhood Plan areas.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that “*neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need*”.<sup>1</sup> Further advice on the preparation of neighbourhood plans is contained in the Government’s Planning Practice Guidance.

A neighbourhood plan is prepared by a qualifying body – the local parish/town council or, in a non-parished area, the formally designated neighbourhood forum. Local planning authorities are required to assist qualifying bodies in their plan making.

Neighbourhood plans have statutory weight once they are finalised and formally ‘made’ as part of the development plan for the local area. They are then to be taken into account in the determination of planning applications.

## *Independent Examination*

This Examiner’s Report sets out the findings of the Examination into the Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter referred to as the Neighbourhood Plan in this Report).

I was appointed to examine the Neighbourhood Plan by Aylesbury Vale District Council with the consent of Great Horwood Parish Council. I am independent of both bodies. I have no interest in land that may be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan. I have appropriate qualifications and over 35 years town and country planning experience.

The Examiner’s role is to decide whether the neighbourhood plan being examined meets the Basic Conditions set out in the relevant legislation<sup>2</sup> following the Localism Act, and complies with the other specified requirements as set out later in this Report.

The Examiner is also required to recommend either that:

- the neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum, or
- modifications are made and that the modified neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum, or
- the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to a referendum on the basis it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

---

<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

The general rule for carrying out an examination of a neighbourhood plan is for the Examiner to solely consider the relevant written material – the submitted documents, background evidence and the written representations made by interested parties.

However in addition the Examiner has the ability to call a hearing for the purposes of receiving oral representations about a **particular issue** in any case where the Examiner considers it is necessary to ensure:

- adequate examination of any relevant issue, and/or
- to ensure a person has a fair chance to put a case.

In the case of this Neighbourhood Plan I decided to hold a hearing and put questions concerning specific issues to those persons and parties I invited to make oral representations.

Such oral representations have no greater weight than the representations that have been made in writing which have also been taken into account in the preparation of this Report.

### *Next Stages*

This is a Report to Aylesbury Vale District Council, the local planning authority for the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan. The Council will decide how to act on my recommendations. The Council is responsible for arranging any referendum and, if there is majority support at such a vote, to ‘make’ the Neighbourhood Plan so that it becomes part of the development plan.

## **2.The Development Plan**

The development plan for any local area is typically made up of several plans that have been prepared at different times and often by different planning authorities. The extent to which these plans are currently in force and applicable to the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan being examined depends on their content, how up to date they are and, related to the latter, whether steps have been taken to ‘save’ policies in plans produced several years ago.

### *The Development Plan Currently In Force in Great Horwood*

- The saved policies of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan 2001-11 adopted 2004
- The saved policies of the Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2004-16 adopted 2006
- The Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy adopted 2012

The emerging Aylesbury Vale Local Plan is at a very early stage of preparation following withdrawal of the Vale of Aylesbury Plan at its examination stage in February 2014.

### 3. Basic Conditions

The key consideration in the examination of a neighbourhood plan is whether it meets the applicable Basic Conditions. In order to meet the Basic Conditions 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 development plan for the area, and
- not breach, and be otherwise compatible with European Union (EU) obligations and the European Convention on Human Rights<sup>3</sup>.

The national policies and advice are primarily those set out in the National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012 and the latest version of the Government's Planning Practice Guidance, an on-line resource first published in March 2014.

There are various definitions of sustainable development but the United Nations General Assembly defined it "*as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*".<sup>4</sup> There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

Environmental considerations are picked up further in the EU Directive<sup>5</sup> on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). In certain circumstances a SEA can be required for a neighbourhood plan.

The principal parts of the European Convention on Human Rights that can be relevant to neighbourhood plans are: Article 8 (privacy); Article 14 (discrimination); and Article 1 of the first Protocol (property).

---

<sup>3</sup> This has the same meaning as the Human Rights Act 1998

<sup>4</sup> United Nations General Assembly – Resolution 24/187

<sup>5</sup> EU Directive 2001/42

The basis of the Basic Conditions is set out in the relevant primary legislation<sup>6</sup>. This provides for further Basic Conditions to be prescribed. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations specify a further relevant Basic Condition concerning European habitats legislation. To meet this Basic Condition a neighbourhood plan must:

- not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.<sup>7</sup>

Compliance with the Basic Conditions is considered later in this Report but particularly within *The Plan as a Whole* and *The Policies* Sections.

Apart from the correction of minor grammatical errors I have only recommended modifications to this Neighbourhood Plan (presented in **bold type**) where I consider changes need to be made to meet the Basic Conditions.

## 4.Unaccompanied Visit and Documents

I have inspected the sites proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan and viewed the wider area.

The documents I have taken account of in my examination are listed in Appendix A to this Report. They include national policies and guidance, relevant legislation, the Neighbourhood Plan and the supporting documents submitted with it, background evidence documents and the written representations made.

During my examination I requested clarification on two points:

- the locations of the publicly accessible land in the Parish
- the gross and net sizes of the sites referred to in Policies 2, 3 and 4

The responses to these points of clarification were a Green Spaces Map and details (text and maps) of the respective site sizes. These responses were posted on the District Council's website and paper copies produced for inspection at the examination Hearing. I have taken account of these responses in my examination of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Following the Hearing I decided to invite representations on the appropriateness and relevance to the Neighbourhood Plan of the Vale of Aylesbury Plan ('VAP') and Stage 1 Community Infrastructure Levy ('CIL') Viability Study. I have taken account of the representations submitted.

---

<sup>6</sup> Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Paragraph 8(2) Schedule 4B

<sup>7</sup> The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 32

## 5.The Neighbourhood Plan Area

The spatial area covered by a neighbourhood plan has to be formally designated as such by the local planning authority. There is a map showing the Designated Area on page 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Designated Area coincides with the whole Parish of Great Horwood. Further to the application made by Great Horwood Parish Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council approved the Designated Area on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2012. No other neighbourhood development plan has been made for the Designated Area.

Great Horwood Parish is located in Aylesbury Vale District in the County of Buckinghamshire. There are two settlements in the Parish – Great Horwood and Singleborough. The population of the Parish is about 1,050 and of those approximately 700 people live in the village of Great Horwood.

The village has few services. Those that are present include a primary school, church, two public houses, a village hall and a vehicle servicing garage. There is no retail convenience store, just a travelling post office only one day per week. Very little recreational/play space exists central to the village. The Horwode Pece Recreation Ground at Spring Lane is well supplied with children’s play equipment but is detached from the built up area on land to the south of the village. The cricket and football club fields are outside the village to the north. The State of the Parish Report<sup>8</sup> records that the Parish is deficient of green space on most measures.

Singleborough has the form of a single street hamlet, which the State of the Parish Report<sup>9</sup> states supports an Early Years Centre. The same report refers to there being very few places of employment within the Parish’s two settlements. However there is 6000 square metres of business space south of the village at the Greenway Business Park built on part of the former Second World War airfield.

The nearest larger settlement to Great Horwood is Winslow about 2 miles to the south of the village; the significantly larger town of Buckingham is approximately 5 miles away to the north west – both places have secondary school provision, a range of shops and other services. The centre of Milton Keynes, with its wide range of services, is within 10 miles of Great Horwood.

There are direct scheduled bus services from Great Horwood village to both Winslow and Milton Keynes but the frequency is less than 5 per day.

In landscape terms Great Horwood Parish is located in the Horwood Claylands character area – *“an undulating landform with mixed agricultural use”*.<sup>10</sup> Great Horwood village itself

---

<sup>8</sup> Great Horwood State of the Parish Report pp31-32

<sup>9</sup> Great Horwood State of the Parish Report p30

<sup>10</sup> Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment – Horwood Claylands



occupies a slightly elevated position, above land to the south and west in particular, at around 125 metres above sea level.

Both Great Horwood village and Singleborough have Conservation Areas and there are a total of 46 listed buildings in the Parish, all of which are Grade II except for the Grade II\* buildings of St James Church in the centre of the village and Manor Farm on Nash Road.

Great Horwood village dates back to before the time of the Domesday Book of 1086. The Church of St James originates from at least the 13<sup>th</sup> century and, despite a fire in the centre of the village in 1781 that destroyed numerous buildings, several thatched farmhouses and cottages remain. The historic core of the village includes residential properties with large rear gardens that are considered to be remnants of the medieval open field system.

Another feature from medieval times is ridge-and-furrow. These field earthworks are particularly prevalent on the north side of the village. However they have no statutory protection.

Not surprisingly given its heritage, the majority of the core of Great Horwood village is an Archaeological Notification Area indicating the existence or probable existence of assets of archaeological interest. Such a designation is not necessarily a constraint on development. That would depend on what assets may be discovered prior to and/or during construction and what mitigation measures, if appropriate and necessary, may be feasible.

Development of the village in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century largely stems from the release of redundant military land associated with the airfield. This amounted to the re-use of previously developed land on the south-eastern side of the village for housing. The only significant greenfield land to be developed for housing in the last century was on former farmland off Little Horwood Road – the small estates now known as Townsend Cottages and Weston Road.

All apart from one of these post-war developments comprise between 16 and 25 dwellings. The exception is the significantly larger development at Spring Lane/Greenway again built of former military land. There has been very little development since 2000 and only 11 dwelling completions between 2005 and 2013,

In terms of design *“post-war development is more urban or suburban in character, whilst “one-off” houses and conversions of former farm-buildings have generally been more sympathetic to the village character”*.<sup>11</sup>

The Great Horwood Historic Town Assessment confirms that the present day village comprises a variety of architectural styles and its settlement morphology is also mixed, including a linear element along the north side of Little Horwood Road.

---

<sup>11</sup> Great Horwood Historic Town Assessment p42

## 6. Community Engagement and Consultation

Great Horwood Parish Council has a long track record of planning for the future of the local area. Starting in 2004 the Parish Council embarked on the process of preparing a Parish Plan. That Plan was completed and published in 2006.

Following the publication of the Localism Act, Aylesbury Vale District Council encouraged local communities to start preparing neighbourhood plans. As part of this there was a Community Survey of residents and employers in Great Horwood Parish carried out in October 2011 by the Great Horwood Parish Plan Steering Committee. The residents' survey form was delivered to every home in the Parish and a high response rate of 65% was achieved.

The results of that survey work are reproduced in the Great Horwood Community View document. It stated that *"the view is of a community which is not afraid to look forward and accepts that in a changing world it cannot stand still. Great Horwood recognises that some residential and employment development is likely between now and 2031 and that, if handled appropriately, it can benefit the community. At the same time, the community is keen to retain the distinctive character and special features of the parish. It believes by doing so Great Horwood will continue to thrive and to be a place where people want to live and, having arrived, to stay"*<sup>12</sup>

This initial engagement, which preceded work on the Neighbourhood Plan, shows a positive attitude existed towards future development within the community. Building on this position Great Horwood Parish Council applied for and was granted "Front-Runner" status for preparing a neighbourhood plan. The preparatory work on the forthcoming plan was to be prepared by a newly constituted Neighbourhood Plan Team.

The Team first met on 15 March 2012 – the minutes of all their meetings are published on the Parish Council's website. Although the Team had a degree of independence to develop the Neighbourhood Plan it included Parish Councillor representation and regular reporting back to the Parish Council. Furthermore it is clear from the Team's terms of reference that although the group shall act on behalf of the Parish Council *"all key milestones must be ratified by the Parish Council which has primacy in all matters"*<sup>13</sup>

From the Consultation Statement (as required by the Regulations<sup>14</sup>) submitted with the Neighbourhood Plan it is clear that the local community were engaged at various times during preparatory work. There were open parish meetings and numerous announcements concerning the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

---

<sup>12</sup> Great Horwood Community View

<sup>13</sup> Great Horwood Neighbourhood Plan Team Terms of Reference (updated on 11 November 2013)

<sup>14</sup> Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

Although preparatory work on the Neighbourhood Plan appears to have started with a broad range of issues in mind the key matter that emerged from this work was housing provision. In effect this covered the three fundamental questions:

- How much housing should be provided?
- Where should it be built?
- Should provision be phased over time?

Not surprisingly the development of the Neighbourhood Plan was tracking the emergence of the Vale of Aylesbury Plan (VAP). This Local Plan was intended to replace the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan adopted in 2004. The emerging VAP was providing a steer for the Neighbourhood Plan with an answer to the 'How much housing?' question. It was proposing 50 dwellings over the period to 2031 in villages considered by the District Council to be in the 'larger' size category, such as Great Horwood.

However the VAP was withdrawn after it had reached the examination stage in February 2014. This decision of the District Council stems from the examining Inspector's concerns that the VAP was not bringing forward enough housing provision across the District as a whole and complying with the Duty to Co-operate.

Aylesbury Vale District Council nevertheless continued to assist the Parish Council in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Through a series of meetings and other contacts background information has been supplied by the planning authority and there has been effective joint working in various respects including the identification and consideration of possible housing sites and in the preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

There is also evidence that the Parish Council has pro-actively sought to engage with landowners, their agents and/or developers. Notably a key community engagement event intended to present and seek comments on the Parish Council's preferred sites for the Neighbourhood Plan was broadened out to also include the presentation of alternative sites by their prospective developers.

At the Hearing the Parish Council representatives admitted that the process of selecting proposed housing sites for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan had involved some 'hard choices'. It is clear to me that a wide range of sites were considered over a protracted period as part of an iterative process.

Some representors have expressed concerns about how this process was carried out and how certain potential sites became preferred over others. It is not surprising that this process might have appeared confusing to some in the community as the future of the prospective development sites was considered over a protracted period. However I am satisfied that sufficient opportunities were given for local people to express their views, culminating in the community event held over the weekend of 29/30 March 2014. This was an extra step in the consultation process prior to the pre-submission stage.

At around this time all households in the Parish were engaged through the Housing Survey. This achieved an acceptable response rate of over 28% and provided useful data concerning the range of housing needs that exist locally and provision preferences.

Taking account of the community feedback from the end of March community event the Parish Council resolved on 14 April 2014 to publish for consultation the Pre-Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The six week consultation period on the plan ran from 28<sup>th</sup> April until 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

Printed copies of the Neighbourhood Plan were made available in three locations in the village and posted on-line with the associated documents. Near the commencement of the consultation period the well publicised Annual Parish Meeting was held - about 50 people attended, and the Parish Magazine devoted its front page to the Plan published for consultation.

During the Pre-Submission consultation period 101 representations were made by more than 200 local people, developers, landowners and other organisations. The Consultation Statement sets out the organisations that were specifically consulted at this stage – it is a comprehensive list of local authorities, neighbouring parish councils, as well as local, regional and national bodies including infrastructure providers.

The outcome in terms of comments made showed there was substantial public support expressed for the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan. However there were some concerns about specific site proposals and whether the policies could control the overall scale of housing development to that intended. Some of these concerns were echoed by landowners and developers as part of promoting alternative proposals. There were generally constructive comments from statutory consultees and infrastructure providers.

From a procedural standpoint I am satisfied that this stage of producing the Neighbourhood Plan has been carried out in accordance with the Regulations.<sup>15</sup> In terms of the overall community engagement process I am satisfied that it was proportionate to the scale and complexity of the draft Plan.

The Consultation Statement charts the overall development of the Neighbourhood Plan and specifically refers to the changes made to the Plan resulting from responses made to the Pre-Submission consultation. These were minor revisions in respect of design requirements for each site proposal in terms of the establishment of clear defensible boundaries as well as paying regard to the Conservation Area and its setting.

On the more fundamental issues of the overall scale of housing, the size of sites, their location and phasing it is clear that there is broad support in the community for the proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan. It is also clear to me that very considerable voluntary effort has been expended on producing a concise and well presented Neighbourhood Plan and associated documents. The consultation that has been carried out goes well beyond the

---

<sup>15</sup> Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 14

statutory minimum. The preparatory process has been carried out transparently and the outcomes widely publicised. There have been numerous opportunities to comment.

There is evidence to show that the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan have emerged from the views of local people. In conclusion I am satisfied that the consultation process has been carried out in an open, comprehensive and robust manner.

## **7.Submission of the Plan**

The Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan was approved by Great Horwood Parish Council on 14 July 2014 and was submitted for examination together with the supporting documents as required by the Regulations<sup>16</sup> to Aylesbury Vale District Council.

The District Council proceeded to publicise the Neighbourhood Plan and invited representations in accordance with the Regulations<sup>17</sup>. The period for representations was from 21 July until 8 September 2014 – a week longer than the statutory minimum given the summer holiday period.

A total of 33 representations were made during the publication period including a petition carrying the names, addresses and signatures of 49 residents living in the Neighbourhood Plan area. All of the written representations were taken into consideration in preparing this Report even though the points they raise may not be referred to specifically.

No representations were received after the close of the publicity period. I am satisfied that the publicity requirements set out under Regulation 16 have been met and the District Council confirmed at the Hearing that the Neighbourhood Plan submitted for independent examination complies with all the statutory requirements. I explain in Section 1 of this Report why I decided to hold a hearing. I have taken into account all the oral representations made at the Hearing.

Also at the Hearing in response to one of my questions the District Council referred to a development viability study<sup>18</sup>. As this evidence had not been presented as a submission document I decided to allow a two week period for representations to be made on its appropriateness and relevance to the Neighbourhood Plan. All the parties that had made representations at the Regulation 16 publication stage and additional parties invited to attend the Hearing were asked if they wanted to make comments on the viability study. A total of 13 such representations were received within the allotted time. I have taken account of all the points made in writing this Report.

---

<sup>16</sup> Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 15

<sup>17</sup> Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 16

<sup>18</sup> Vale of Aylesbury Plan ('VAP') and Stage 1 Community Infrastructure Levy ('CIL') Viability Study – September 2012

## 8.The Plan - Introductory Sections

I now set out my consideration on the introductory parts of the Neighbourhood Plan but leave reference to the evidence documents to later Sections of my Report. I also now go on to make a small number of suggestions concerning the non-policy text as set out below. These are made with the intention of improving the presentation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

First of all I make a passing comment about the quotations taken from the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). These are referenced under paragraph 1.4 of the Neighbourhood Plan. The cited paragraphs of the Framework are not quoted in full and although the selected text is appropriately relevant not all the missing word breaks are shown.

Should the Neighbourhood Plan proceed to referendum and be made, certain text will need to be written in the past tense. In this way the Neighbourhood Plan would read properly in the future. An example of this is the explanation of the preparatory work done on Strategic Environmental Assessment in paragraphs 1.5 and 1.6.

Section 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan helpfully sets out the key characteristics of the Parish and quotes informative statistics, some of which have been supplied by the District Council. This is an example of the two Councils collaborating and sharing evidence.

Paragraph 2.1 of the Neighbourhood Plan mentions the North Buckinghamshire Way/Midshires Way footpaths but incorrectly refers to their alignment as pointed out by a representor. This fact needs to be corrected.

Under Paragraph 2.8 sub-heading 'Economy' the Greenway Business Park should be referred to as 'existing' rather than being 'allocated' as the latter term implies this site is either being proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan or a Local Plan, neither of which is the case.

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a range of issues being faced locally however the overall scope of the proposed policies is limited to housing provision and associated open space. At the Hearing the Parish Council confirmed these are the most pertinent issues facing the Parish and the matters of most concern to the local community as whole. Groups preparing neighbourhood plans have wide discretion as to what topics to cover. I accept that housing provision is the top local priority and the Parish Council are to be commended for tackling this challenging matter.

Chapter/Section 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan refers to Vision and Objectives. The Vision provides the guiding basis for pursuing the four Policies. However for the Vision to read better its tense should be changed so that it represents what is intended to have been achieved by the end of the plan period in 2031.

Under 'Objectives and Measures' the proposed set of indicators appear appropriate and relevant to the four policies.

In terms of 'Monitoring and Review' the pledge to monitor the Neighbourhood Plan on a regular basis is commendable as is the intention to work with the District Council in this regard. The proposed five-year cycle for reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan is a commitment in line with good practice. I deal in Section 9 of my Report with the more fundamental issue of a potential earlier first review dependent on the adoption timing and strategic direction of the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.

## 9.The Plan — as a Whole

In this Section and the one that follows, concerning the Policies (Section 10), I principally consider whether the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

However there are also a few other aspects of content to which I need to refer first. I can confirm the following:

- the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to development and use of land in the Designated Area and do not relate to more than one neighbourhood area.
- the Neighbourhood Plan clearly indicates the period it is to have effect as being 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2031.
- the Neighbourhood Plan does not include provision about excluded development<sup>19</sup> such as minerals or waste proposals, or major infrastructure schemes.

### Meeting the Basic Conditions

Aylesbury Vale District Council confirmed at the Hearing that it believes that the requirements of the Basic Conditions have been met by the Neighbourhood Plan in terms of having regard to national policy; contributing to the achievement of sustainable development; being in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan, and being compatible with human rights requirements and European Union obligations.

As required by the Regulations<sup>20</sup> the Parish Council submitted a Basic Conditions Statement setting out how it considers the Neighbourhood Plan complies in these respects. I now consider each aspect of the Basic Conditions in terms of the Neighbourhood Plan taken as a whole.

---

<sup>19</sup> Section 38B(1)(b) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

<sup>20</sup> Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 – Regulation 15(d)

## **European Union (EU) Obligations, Habitats and Human Rights Requirements**

The submitted Basic Conditions Statement says “*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*”.<sup>21</sup> I have given consideration to the European Convention on Human Rights. I have seen nothing in the submitted Neighbourhood Plan that indicates a breach of the Convention. No concerns on this matter were made in representations or at the Hearing.

I am satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Convention.

In terms of habitats the Basic Conditions Statement says “*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*”.<sup>22</sup> No representations have been made expressing concern in this regard and Natural England states that it “*does not consider that this plan poses any likely significant risk to internationally or nationally designated nature conservation or landscape sites*”.<sup>23</sup>

I am satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

EU Directive 2001/42 refers to Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to a sustainability appraisal. There is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to have a sustainability appraisal as is required for Local Plans and associated documents. However as bodies preparing neighbourhood plans must demonstrate how such plans will contribute to achieving sustainable development a sustainability appraisal can be a useful approach for doing this.

A sustainability appraisal incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). A SEA is required for neighbourhood plans in limited circumstances. Where the proposals in the plan could have significant environmental effects a SEA may be required. That requirement and the level of detail needed in any SEA will depend on what is proposed in the neighbourhood plan.

To decide whether the Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan required a SEA Aylesbury Vale District Council provided a screening opinion. This concluded the Neighbourhood Plan “*is likely to have significant environmental effects beyond those expected by ‘strategic’ district-wide policies of the Local Plan, and therefore this does trigger a need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment. We recommend this incorporates a*

---

<sup>21</sup> Basic Conditions Statement – Paragraph 6.1

<sup>22</sup> Basic Conditions Statement – Paragraph 6.4

<sup>23</sup> Natural England letter of 4<sup>th</sup> September 2014



*Sustainability Appraisal, to consider more widely the balance of sustainability, and to help ensure the plan meets the basic conditions”.*<sup>24</sup>

It is clear that work on the Sustainability Appraisal commenced as the Neighbourhood Plan was being developed. A comprehensive Scoping Report was produced jointly by the Parish and District Councils and although it is based on evidence used for the withdrawn Vale of Aylesbury Plan I am satisfied that the sustainability information in the Scoping Report remains a valid basis for environmental assessment.

The Scoping Report was then sent to the three consultation bodies – English Heritage, Natural England and the Environment Agency all of whom provided positive and constructive comments. I am satisfied that the Scoping Report sufficiently identified the scope and level of detail of the information to be included in the environmental report needed for the SEA.

A Draft Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating a SEA environmental report, was produced in April 2014 and consulted on alongside the Pre-Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Draft Sustainability Appraisal took account of and assessed alternative housing development options drawing from the range of potential sites being considered for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan. I consider that the development options assessed constitute realistic and deliverable reasonable alternatives.

At the consultation stage there was some concern expressed by representors as to how the positive and negative effects of each alternative were identified and how the sites proposed for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan were evaluated. These aspects were addressed through clearer and more balanced presentation of the assessment results in the submitted version of the Sustainability Appraisal of July 2014.

Some representors have questioned the level of detail used in the SEA. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (the Guidance) makes clear that the SEA work *“should focus on the environmental impacts which are likely to be significant. It does not need to be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is considered to be appropriate for the content and level of detail in the neighbourhood plan”.*<sup>25</sup>

I am satisfied that the reporting of the assessment process has set out appropriate reasoning for rejecting options that were not taken forward and for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives. The process has taken account of the objectives and geographical scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.

I am also satisfied that all preparatory stages of producing an environmental report in the correct manner have been appropriately completed and have informed the plan making process in an iterative way.

---

<sup>24</sup> SEA Screening Report (February 2014) – Paragraph 5.1

<sup>25</sup> Planning Policy Guidance – Reference ID: 11-030-20140306

The Consultation Statement records that all three sites selected for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan *“have some weaknesses”*.<sup>26</sup> However minor modifications were made to the submitted Neighbourhood Plan particularly in respect of design requirements and establishing defensible boundaries for the proposed sites. I agree with the overall outcome of the environmental assessment process, that subject to those changes, *“there are no significant adverse effects resulting from the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan”*.<sup>27</sup> Although the Planning Practice Guidance does not use the word “adverse” I take it to mean ‘negative’ – meaning no significant negative effects.

In conclusion I am satisfied that the SEA process has been properly carried out, involving collaborative working with Aylesbury Vale District Council, and fully consulted on. The outcomes of the assessment have been used to inform and directly influence the final content of the Neighbourhood Plan.

I am satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with EU obligations and Convention rights.

### ***Regard to National Policies and Advice Contained in Guidance Issued by the Secretary of State, and Contribution to the Achievement of Sustainable Development***

National policies and advice are primarily those set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Government’s Planning Practice Guidance (the Guidance).

The Framework confirms that *“the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.”*<sup>28</sup> Also that *“there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.”*<sup>29</sup> *“These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent...therefore, to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously...”*<sup>30</sup>

These references underline the wisdom of producing a Sustainability Appraisal for the Neighbourhood Plan as the process encapsulates the consideration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The Basic Conditions Statement states that the Sustainability Appraisal assesses the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan *“as delivering positive sustainable outcomes when compared with the reasonable alternative policy options. In*

---

<sup>26</sup> Consultation Statement – Paragraph 31

<sup>27</sup> Sustainability Appraisal (July 2014) – Paragraph 7.1

<sup>28</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 6

<sup>29</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 7

<sup>30</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 8

*which case, it is considered the Neighbourhood Plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the parish*".<sup>31</sup>

I am satisfied the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

National policies and advice have specific content referring to the preparation of neighbourhood plans. Given the absence of an up to date Local Plan in Aylesbury Vale it is important to recognise the Guidance where it states neighbourhood plans *"can be developed before or at the same time as the local planning authority is producing its Local Plan"* but the same paragraph goes on to explain that any conflict between policies in different plans *"must be resolved by the decision maker favouring the policy which is contained in the last document to become part of the development plan"*.<sup>32</sup>

The Government's intention is that plan making bodies should avoid duplicating planning processes. Neighbourhoods should *"plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan"*<sup>33</sup> Furthermore *"once a neighbourhood plan has demonstrated its general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and is brought into force, the policies it contains can take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict"*.<sup>34</sup>

I will come to consideration of the Neighbourhood Plan in respect of its general conformity with the development plan later in this Section. However it is clear from national policies and advice that neighbourhood plan policies can take precedence over non-strategic Local Plan policies, this is what the Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan aims to do with regard to Policy 1.

The Framework refers to core planning principles, these include that planning should:

- *"be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct ... neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area"*;<sup>35</sup>
- *"always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity..."*;<sup>36</sup>
- *"take account of the different roles and character of different areas ...recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it"*;<sup>37</sup>
- *"conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance..."*;<sup>38</sup>
- *"...deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs"*.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Basic Conditions Statement – Paragraph 4.2

<sup>32</sup> Planning Practice Guidance – Reference ID: 41-009-20140306

<sup>33</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 16

<sup>34</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 185

<sup>35</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 17 – First Principle

<sup>36</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 17 – Fourth Principle

<sup>37</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 17 – Fifth Principle

<sup>38</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 17 – Tenth Principle

<sup>39</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 17 – Twelfth Principle

The submitted Neighbourhood Plan aims to achieve all these relevant principles through its Vision and its Policies. There is a clear commitment to achieving high standards of design and amenity in new development, and a recognition of the particular character of the local area with its significant heritage assets. There is also acknowledgement of a need to improve community facilities such as providing more green space that is accessible to most people.

The Guidance makes clear that underpinning neighbourhood plans should be “*proportionate, robust evidence... [to] ... support the choices made and the approach taken*”.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore the “*local planning authority should share relevant evidence, including that gathered to support its own plan making, with a qualifying body*”.<sup>41</sup>

Great Horwood Parish Council has prepared itself and commissioned evidence on its behalf. However Aylesbury Vale District Council has also collaborated with the Parish Council to produce joint evidence and shared other evidence originally produced for Local Plan purposes.

In paragraph 2.24 the Neighbourhood Plan refers to the withdrawn Vale of Aylesbury Plan (VAP) however rightly in my considered opinion, states that “*to an extent, its reasoning and evidence can still be used to inform*” the Neighbourhood Plan. I am of the view that the Aylesbury Vale documents — Landscape Character Assessment (2008), Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2012) and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2013) remain relevant documents for plan making purposes. I separately consider the Vale of Aylesbury Plan (‘VAP’) and Stage 1 Community Infrastructure Levy (‘CIL’) Viability Study – September 2012 later in my Report.

Further on in paragraph 2.24, the Neighbourhood Plan states “*the Parish Council continues to disagree with the definition of Great Horwood village as a ‘large village’ in the settlement hierarchy of the District*”. This is a reference to the finding of the Aylesbury Vale Settlement Hierarchy Assessment (2012) which concluded Great Horwood should be classed as a ‘larger village’. The Parish Council has produced a critique of the Settlement Hierarchy Assessment and that does reveal some clear errors in the Aylesbury Vale document. However, the District Council is still of the view that, based on its ‘sustainability credentials’, Great Horwood should not be classed as a ‘smaller village’.

Later (in paragraph 4.9) the Neighbourhood Plan states “*The Parish Council expects that the [Neighbourhood Plan] will inform a review of the District Settlement Hierarchy in this regard*” – meaning the size category for Great Horwood. The District Council does intend to produce an updated settlement hierarchy for the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan which the authority concedes may result in changes to the settlement hierarchy.

---

<sup>40</sup> Planning Practice Guidance – Reference ID: 41-040-20140306

<sup>41</sup> Planning Practice Guidance – Reference ID: 41-040-20140306

A number of representors have, however, rightly pointed out that the Neighbourhood Plan cannot decide the settlement hierarchy status of Great Horwood. The settlement hierarchy is a strategic designation that is appropriately determined at the District level taking account of the role and location of settlements across that local authority area.

The current position is therefore that the settlement hierarchy status of Great Horwood remains to be decided in the emerging Local Plan and there is as yet no indication of what the outcome might be. Although the Neighbourhood Plan appears to have been predicated on the assumption that Great Horwood is and will be confirmed in settlement hierarchy terms a 'small village', I see my role as Examiner in more pragmatic terms.

A fundamental question to ask is 'what is an appropriate amount of housing to plan for in Great Horwood given the level of services in the village and the degree of access to services elsewhere by sustainable modes of transport?' Admittedly this question does not address what the requirement for housing in the Parish might be or to what extent Great Horwood might be in a position to provide for the housing needs of the wider area; I will come to these matters later in my Report

It is self evident and not claimed otherwise by any of the respondents to the submitted Neighbourhood Plan, that Great Horwood has a very restricted range of local services. At the Hearing the District Council conceded that the range is "very limited" and admitted that the sustainable transport accessibility to services elsewhere such as Winslow is also "very limited". The District Council's contention that nevertheless there is a "full range/matrix" of facilities when compared to places even more poorly served does not mean that Great Horwood is a well serviced village.

Neighbourhood plans are not just about 'shaping and directing' development but about delivery as well. For the avoidance of doubt the Guidance states a "*neighbourhood plan can allocate sites for development*".<sup>42</sup> The Framework states that neighbourhoods should include "*policies for housing and economic development*".<sup>43</sup> As set out in Section 8 of my Report the Great Horwood Neighbourhood Plan justifiably concentrates on the provision of new housing although outside the Settlement Boundary to Great Horwood village (as proposed in Policy 1) development associated with the rural economy is supported.

In order to know what housing is required in a neighbourhood some assessment of housing need should be carried out. The Guidance clarifies what this means in the context of Local Plan making, the "*need for housing ... refers to the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that is likely to be needed in the housing market area over the plan period...*"<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Planning Practice Guidance – Reference ID: 41-042-20140306

<sup>43</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 16

<sup>44</sup> Planning Practice Guidance - Reference ID: 2a-003-20140306

Housing market areas are likely to be much larger in scale than neighbourhood plan areas however the Guidance goes on to say that the same principle applies *“to identify specific local needs that may be relevant to a neighbourhood but any assessment at such a local level should be proportionate”*. In addition qualifying bodies *“can also refer to existing needs assessments prepared by the local planning authority as a starting point”*. It continues *“The neighbourhood plan should support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans including policies on housing and economic development. The level of housing and economic development is likely to be a strategic policy.”*<sup>45</sup>

This reference means that neighbourhood plans have a limited role in assessing how much housing provision is needed – restricted to identifying specific local needs; and any assessment thereof should be proportionate to the local level. The Guidance then goes on to stress the primacy of the local planning authority’s strategic role in establishing the amount of development required.

However the development requirements in Aylesbury Vale are by no means clear following the withdrawal of the Vale of Aylesbury Plan (VAP) and work on the new emerging Local Plan still being at an early stage. There is currently no draft housing requirement figure for Aylesbury Vale as a whole, no figure for Great Horwood nor any indication how the Parish might be expected to support strategic development needs.

The District Council has pointed out that the emerging Local Plan could potentially require a different amount of housing development in Great Horwood than the amount currently planned for in the Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council have recognised that possibility and under such circumstances state, in paragraph 4.2, that the Neighbourhood Plan *“will be reviewed”* so as to be up to date with the new Local Plan.

Some representors say such a recognition that a early review could be necessary effectively means the Neighbourhood Plan is out of date from the outset and underlines that the Neighbourhood Plan should not be advanced ahead of the emerging Local Plan. Alternatively some representors argue that given a high likelihood of Great Horwood needing to provide for more housing than proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan means it should allow for larger housing sites to come forward now.

My considered view on this is that the recognition of an early review is a sensible pragmatic standpoint by the Parish Council. With decision makers being obliged to favour any later plan when policies conflict, there would be a strong incentive for the Parish Council to do a review quickly. However the extent of any policy conflict in the future cannot be predicted with any accuracy now. Given that uncertainty and reflecting the spirit of the plan-led approach the Parish Council is sensibly continuing with its own plan making.

---

<sup>45</sup> Planning Practice Guidance – Reference ID: 2a-006-20140306

To plan for housing the Neighbourhood Plan has to deal with the issue of establishing what residential development the Parish needs. Several representors have expressed concern at the way the Parish Council has sought to do this by questioning the methodology used and the likelihood of this underestimating the amount of housing Great Horwood should provide.

In considering the potential need for the Neighbourhood Plan to provide for more housing than is proposed in the submitted Policies, sight should not be lost of the very limited service availability in the village. Trying to anticipate what the housing requirement for Aylesbury Vale might be in the emerging Local Plan when it is finalised and what that might mean for Great Horwood by having a very permissive Neighbourhood Plan could lead to unduly excessive development in the Parish. That in turn may undermine the character of the area and not contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Given that there are two main components of housing need – the overall quantity of housing required and the types of housing needed, the Parish Council has appropriately produced two pieces of evidence – Appendix A to the Spatial Policy: Site Size paper, and the Parish Housing Survey.

The Parish Housing Survey, referred to in passing in Section 6, was carried out by consultants using a methodology approved by the District Council and is based on a full survey of households in the Parish.

The Survey results confirm a need for affordable housing of various tenures. The research also found a need for accommodation for elderly people to downsize into; plus starter homes and medium sized family housing. This work constitutes clear, robust evidence of the likely range and tenure of housing needed in the Parish.

In terms of the overall quantum of housing likely to be required Appendix A to the Spatial Policy: Site Size paper sets out a methodology for calculating the number of households in the Parish in 2031. This draws from specialist evidence but also takes account of later available nationally published projections. Although the outcome is sensitive to minor changes in the assumptions I am satisfied that the methodology is appropriately based, justified and proportionate in terms of its complexity and that of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The historical development of Great Horwood village is outlined in Section 5 of this Report with most developments in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century comprising schemes in the 16 to 25 unit size range. Most of the construction took place south and eastwards along Little Horwood Road. The overall village now comprises a mix of architectural styles and range of settlement morphology types including linear and in-depth estate layouts.

The community expressed strong views about the size of sites coming forward (the majority of people favouring schemes in the order of 15 units and not significantly larger), about phasing or spreading development over the Plan period and the location of sites. Perhaps inevitably there is less agreement with the latter. The Spatial Policy: Site Size paper brings together the historical background and community preference considerations. The latter is a significant aspect of neighbourhood plan making – achieving broad support in the community is the essence of local empowerment. I am satisfied this is robust evidence.

In terms of the assessment of potential sites, the Guidance published in March 2014 on how to assess site options came late for the Parish Council to take account of. The Guidance states “a qualifying body should carry out an appraisal of options and assessment of individual sites against clearly identified criteria”<sup>46</sup> and goes on to refer to physical aspects such as access, infrastructure, flood risk; potential landscape, nature and heritage impacts; market attractiveness; as well as environmental/amenity impacts for would be occupiers and neighbouring areas. The Guidance also emphasises the importance of clearly establishing the landownership situation with potential sites.

The Parish Council, in collaboration with the District Council work on the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, spent a considerable amount of time and effort from the summer of 2012 to early 2014 considering available site options. In addition to assessing their site specific characteristics and constraints along with their locational merits the work also considered site size factors in terms of both the historical context of the village and community preference.

The Site Assessments paper summarises the outcomes of this work and to my mind does so too succinctly, underplaying the amount of work and consideration (which also went into the Sustainability Appraisal) that was carried out. I probed this matter at the Hearing and it is clear that the Parish Council did appropriately cover all the factors referred to in Guidance with the possible exception of infrastructure.

I am however satisfied that none of the sites proposed have service infrastructure constraints. The Green Space Map produced in response to one of my clarification points does explain why in spatial terms the Parish does not meet fully the recognised green space accessibility standards set out in the State of the Parish Report.<sup>47</sup> I am particularly concerned about the green space available within 300 metres of dwellings and I will return to this matter later in my Report.

In assessing the availability of potential housing development sites there was clearly extensive contact with landowners and the Parish Council rightly took owners’ intentions into account and appropriately compared these with the expressed community preferences. Again I pursued this matter further at the Hearing. Each of the owners of the sites proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan confirmed their willingness to sell their land for development without any undue delays and that their land was free from any legal impediments and tenancies. Only in one case was there any operational requirement, for slightly improved agricultural access; a matter I address later in this Report.

The financial viability of development is crucial to actually being able to achieve proposals on the ground. The Framework states that “*pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and cost in plan-making and decision taking. Plans should be deliverable. Therefore, the sites and scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened. To ensure viability the costs of any requirements...should, when taking*

---

<sup>46</sup> Planning Practice Guidance – Reference ID: 41-042-20140306

<sup>47</sup> State of the Parish Report – p31



*account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable”<sup>48</sup>*

At the Hearing the Parish Council gave assurances that the obligations and policy burdens on the three sites proposed could in each case be met and the development still provide a sufficient return to the landowner. The financial position was likened to ‘exception site’ development economics. This was said in the presence of the landowners and they did not demur from that verbal statement.

A particular policy burden in the Neighbourhood Plan is a 35% level of affordable housing to be sought on development sites. The Government has recently brought in a policy that affordable housing should not be sought on sites of 10 units or less subject to some exceptions.<sup>49</sup> Setting that aside for the time being and considering larger sites, those in the order of 15 dwellings (as proposed), the Neighbourhood Plan refers in paragraph 4.14 to the 35% level of affordable housing being in accordance with the Aylesbury Vale Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document of 2007.

The District Council has however pointed out that this document is no longer in use and the authority has reverted to using Policy GP2 of the AVDLP; paragraph 4.14 in the Neighbourhood Plan clearly needs to be changed to reflect this fact. However Policy GP2 relates to sites of 25 or more dwellings or 1 hectare or more in size and in such cases seeks between 20% and 30% levels of affordable housing as a proportion of market housing schemes. Given that this policy relates to sites larger than proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan it is not necessarily relevant to it.

However in the context of affordable housing, the District Council did indicate at the Hearing and for the first time in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan that they had what they considered to be relevant broader scale viability evidence. The authority cited the Vale of Aylesbury Plan (‘VAP’) and Stage 1 Community Infrastructure Levy (‘CIL’) Viability Study – September 2012 which considers development sites as small as 10 dwellings. As this evidence was newly introduced I decided to invite comments on the appropriateness and relevance of the Viability Study.

I note that the Aylesbury Vale Affordable Housing Interim Position Statement, produced by the District Council in June 2014, does refer to the Viability Study but it is silent on the proportion of affordable housing that should be sought on sites smaller than 25 dwellings/1 hectare. Unfortunately the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared at a time of changing and uncertain policy positions on affordable housing.

I considered the comments submitted on the Viability Study made in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan. The Viability Study is a high level, non-site specific document that was used to inform the VAP and intended for the proposed introduction of CIL in Aylesbury Vale. It was carried out about two years ago and no doubt circumstances have moved on to a

---

<sup>48</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 173

<sup>49</sup> Planning Practice Guidance – Reference ID: 23b-012-20141128

degree since then. However I do not consider the Viability Study should be dismissed just because of its age nor due to its association with a withdrawn Local Plan.

The Viability Study refers to a range of housing development sizes and affordable housing percentages including 15 dwelling schemes with a 35% affordable housing target and finds that development type to be viable in the 'Northern Vale' which includes Great Horwood. I note a range of greenfield land values are used in the various assessments but I am surprised the highest land cost inputted into the calculations is only £500,000 per hectare.

Clearly the Viability Study does not prove that 15 dwelling housing schemes with 35% affordable housing in Great Horwood would be viable. It cannot be expected to take into account site-specific considerations and the detailed policy requirements as set out in the Neighbourhood Plan. Nevertheless the Viability Study does conclude in this part of the District that *"on the whole, viability is not expected to be a significant issue on a range of sites away from the strategic towns, again providing the usual caveats about the CIL margins and site specific/incidence of abnormal development costs etc are taken account of"*.<sup>50</sup> As pointed out by the District Council I also note that the Viability Study has been used to justify the affordable housing policy position in the Marsh Gibbon Neighbourhood Plan also located in the Northern Vale. Similarly the District Council also supports its use at Great Horwood.

My considered view on all of this is the Viability Study is relevant to the Great Horwood Neighbourhood Plan and it is appropriate to have regard to its findings subject to certain caveats.

Although the full potential extent of developer contributions to be sought from developments in the Neighbourhood Plan remains to be decided it is nevertheless pertinent to reflect national policy and advice in this regard.

The Framework states that *"Planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:*

- *necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;*
- *directly related to the development; and*
- *fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development"*.<sup>51</sup>

Several representors expressed doubts about whether the proposed development sites given their relatively small size, affordable housing requirement, design-related provisions and, in two cases, provision of open park/landscaping areas, would be viable. Furthermore several parties question whether the Neighbourhood Plan reflects the above national policy

---

<sup>50</sup> Vale of Aylesbury Plan ('VAP') and Stage 1 Community Infrastructure Levy ('CIL') Viability Study – Paragraph 3.2.2

<sup>51</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 204

which is also embodied in the Community Infrastructure Regulations.<sup>52</sup> To an extent I share those concerns and recommend modifications in Section 10 of my Report.

Finally in this part of my Report I consider the proposed Settlement Boundary in the Neighbourhood Plan. Objections were made to both the positioning and principle of having such a boundary. I consider the positioning of the boundary in Section 10 of my Report.

The line of reasoning as to the principle that has been made by objectors is that the proposed Settlement Boundary is too restrictive in the context of the considerable uncertainty regarding strategic housing needs in Aylesbury Vale and as a consequence options of allowing other land at the village and elsewhere in the Parish should not be closed off; at least not at this time. So objectors contend in these circumstances any settlement boundary that restricts housing development outside it is inappropriate and contrary to the Framework. Also objectors claim that having in effect a three year interim policy is not consistent with the Framework, it is a misinterpretation of national policy and it would be unlawful to put the Neighbourhood Plan to referendum in this form.

The Basic Conditions Statement sets out that in relation to settlement boundary definition the Neighbourhood Plan is *“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)”*.<sup>53</sup>

My considered view is that defining a settlement boundary is an appropriate policy mechanism for a neighbourhood plan. In itself such a boundary is not of strategic significance and as such falls within the scope of a neighbourhood plan as part of being able to ‘shape and direct sustainable development’ in the local area. However as with most policy provisions the proposed Settlement Boundary needs to have a degree of flexibility in relation to what amount of development it allows but that is a positioning consideration I come to later in my Report.

Policy 1 in my view cannot effectively function without a defined settlement boundary. If the boundary turns out to be too tight when the emerging Local Plan is adopted then decision makers will need to resolve any policy conflict by favouring the later plan, unless or until the Neighbourhood Plan has been/is reviewed. I am satisfied that progress of the Neighbourhood Plan should not be held up at this time due to it proposing a settlement boundary.

---

<sup>52</sup> Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 – Regulation 122(2)

<sup>53</sup> Basic Conditions Statement – Paragraph 5.5

Subject to my recommended modifications to the specific Policies, as set out later in this Report, I find that the Neighbourhood Plan, taken as a whole, has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State and contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

### **General Conformity with the Strategic Policies Contained in the Development Plan**

The Framework states that *“Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan... [and] ... should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies”*.<sup>54</sup> The Framework continues in similar terms in relation to when a neighbourhood plan is brought into force, at which point *“the policies it contains can take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict”*<sup>55</sup>

The part of the development plan that is relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan and is currently in force are the saved policies of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan. This Local Plan was adopted in 2004 and had a plan period that ran to 2011. It is therefore ‘time-expired’ however its saved policies are used in the determination of planning applications.

The Neighbourhood Plan lists saved policies from the 2004 Local Plan that have general application in that they do not refer to specific sites. The District Council has not identified a definitive list of saved Local Plan policies that are considered to be strategic. However, at the Hearing, authority Officers confirmed they had checked the Neighbourhood Plan is in conformity with relevant saved policies (those of District-wide application) but added that the housing policies in the Local Plan are out of date so the Framework takes precedence over them. In effect from a housing provision point of view there is currently no existing strategic direction.

Paragraph 4.4 of the Neighbourhood Plan refers to the effect the proposed Settlement Boundary would have assuming the Neighbourhood Plan is made – Policy 1 would take *“precedence over Local plan Policies RA3, RA13 and RA14”*. The District Council stated at the Hearing that the authority is comfortable with that situation arising and also confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan is appropriately proposing more housing than envisaged in Great Horwood by the 2004 Local Plan.

I am satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with strategic policies contained in the development plan.

---

<sup>54</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 184

<sup>55</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 185

## 10.The Plan — Policies

A relevant part of the first Core Planning Principle set out in the Framework is that plans “*should provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency*”.<sup>56</sup>

The Guidance says:

*“A policy in a neighbourhood plan should be clear and unambiguous. It should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence. It should be distinct to reflect and respond to the unique characteristics and planning context of the specific neighbourhood area for which it has been prepared”.*<sup>57</sup>

There are four Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan; they are set out in Section 4 – ‘Land Use Policies’. Policy 1 aims to provide the overall approach to planning in the Parish and the context for the other Policies. Policies 2, 3 and 4 refer to specific sites

Section 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan appropriately starts with an overall introduction. Each Policy is then set out in turn and clearly distinguished from other text by the use of bold italic type. Below each Policy is supporting text containing an explanation of the policy intent and its justification, including reference to the relevant key evidence. I find this format easy to follow and logical.

My main focus in deciding whether the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions is on the Policies, as these are key to guiding the determination of planning applications. Almost inevitably where I recommend a modification to a Policy there will be a consequential need to modify the supporting text to also meet the Basic Conditions.

Recommended modifications to meet the Basic Conditions are shown in **bold type**. They are set out as matters are dealt with in this Section of my Report and are reproduced in Plan order in Appendix B.

### Policy 1: Spatial Policy and Sustainable Development

In relation to Policy 1 I consider each policy provision in turn under sub-headings.

#### *Positioning of Settlement Boundary*

The proposed Settlement Boundary at Great Horwood village is intended to distinguish between the main built-up extent of the village, where most of the development envisaged in the Neighbourhood Plan is expected to occur, and the remainder of the Parish –

---

<sup>56</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 17 – First Principle

<sup>57</sup> Planning Practice Guidance – Reference ID: 41-041-20140306

predominantly open countryside where only limited development is considered appropriate. The principle of there being a Settlement Boundary at all has been questioned in representations. I consider that aspect in Section 9 of my Report and conclude it is appropriate for neighbourhood plans to propose settlement boundaries. In terms of this Neighbourhood Plan, having a settlement boundary, assists in clarifying the operation of Policy 1. I now turn my attention to whether the Settlement Boundary is appropriately positioned.

In paragraph 4.5 the Neighbourhood Plan states that the Settlement Boundary *“is principally derived from the definition of the ‘built up area’ in the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan”*. I take the use of the word ‘principally’ to allow for the fact that the Settlement Boundary *“has also been defined to include land that is proposed for allocation for housing development in Policies 2, 3 and 4”* of the Neighbourhood Plan. This is sensible, so in principle I support including the land intended for housing development within the Settlement Boundary.

The Local Plan built up area definition is:

*“land within the settlement framework principally occupied by permanent buildings. This would not normally include recreation or amenity land, playing fields, allotments or similar open or wooded areas that contribute to the settlement form, or large grounds and gardens on the rural margins of settlements”*.<sup>58</sup>

This wording was produced to assist with the application of Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan Policies RA13 and RA14. These are policies that the Neighbourhood Plan states it will replace; nevertheless I consider it to be an appropriate starting point for defining the Settlement Boundary.

The Settlement Boundary as proposed in the submitted Neighbourhood Plan is shown by a black line on Inset A to the Policies Map. Apart from where it includes land intended to be allocated for housing development it quite closely follows the main built-up extent of Great Horwood village.

The historic core of the village is included within the proposed Settlement Boundary but not all of the Conservation Area. The latter includes a significant amount of private open space, much of which now serves as residential gardens. These open areas are historically significant in terms of the medieval field system, hence their inclusion in the Conservation Area.

Some representors have suggested including additional land within the Settlement Boundary.

The representation made on behalf of Sarah Proctor & Co proposes land in two parts of the village be included within the Settlement Boundary. Firstly I consider land at the junction of School End, High Street and Singleborough Lane. The representation makes two main points about this land: it *“is considered to be neither important public open space nor important green space”* and *“The Conservation Area boundary draws the site into the*

---

<sup>58</sup> Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan – Paragraph 10.48

*residential form of the village, its historic core and its historic settlement pattern reinforcing its role [as] a part of the developed settlement as opposed to being off lying or detached open countryside”.*

This open land was evaluated in terms of its potential contribution to the Conservation Area when that designation was reviewed in 2012. There was initially an error in how the findings of the Conservation Area appraisal were presented in map form when the review report was published. However the correct position is that the land was found to be *“important green space, and provides good landscape views out from the built up area of the High Street. The field is an important gap site, and provides an interesting visual contrast with the continuous building line of the High Street”.*<sup>59</sup>

I conclude that the land is outside the built up extent of the village. It represents land on the rural margin of the settlement. Its inclusion in the Conservation Area is not a reason for drawing the Settlement Boundary around it so as to include it. The justification for its Conservation Area status appropriately explains its role in that separate regard.

The Sarah Proctor & Co representation also proposes a large swathe of land on the south side of the village, including the ‘Caravan Park’ and open land off Willow Road, to be enclosed within the Settlement Boundary. Much of the reasoning presented in the representation for including this land refers to the claimed merits of developing the open land. It is not part of my examination to consider the appropriateness of development schemes not proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan. The land may be demarked by *“traditional field boundaries”* but is clearly land on the rural margin of the village outside the built up area and not contained within it.

The representation made on behalf of the Peter Dean Estate also relates to extending the Settlement Boundary to the south of the village to include Horwood Old Mill. In summary the representation states *“the proposed Settlement Boundary has sought to exclude previously developed sites with a strong relationship to the village where re-use would offer benefits to the surrounding area and village as a whole”.*

The previously developed status of the Old Mill and its scope for re-use are not persuasive factors in my consideration for inclusion of the land within the Settlement Boundary. The site is beyond the edge of the village detached from it by open fields, meaning that, in the physical sense at least, it has a very weak relationship with the built up area.

After considering these and the other representations arguing for a more expansive Settlement Boundary I am satisfied that its alignment as proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan is appropriate and there are no reasons to amend it to meet the Basic Conditions.

---

<sup>59</sup> Great Horwood Conservation Area Review (2012) – p17

### *Size of development proposals*

Policy 1 criterion i seeks to limit housing development proposals within the Settlement Boundary to “no more than 15 dwellings and of land of no more than 0.5 hectares”. I discuss the historical context for justifying developments of approximately that size earlier in my Report and recognise also there is a community preference generally favouring this scale of scheme. However I consider that the wording is too precise, slightly larger developments are unlikely to have a significantly different impact on the character of the village. Furthermore policies should have an element of flexibility to allow decision takers an element of discretion in determining planning applications on their individual merits.

I therefore recommend the following modification to meet the Basic Conditions:

**Policy 1 criterion i. – delete first “no more than” and replace with “up to approximately” before “15”; delete second “no more than” and replace with “up to about” before “0.5”**

Paragraph 4.12 needs to be modified as a consequence of the above modification again to meet the Basic Conditions:

**Paragraph 4.12 lines 3 & 4 – add “approximately” before “15”; delete “no more than” and replace with “up to about” before “0.5”**

### *The overall scale of housing development implied by Policy 1*

As each of the three housing allocations proposed in the remaining three Policies of the Neighbourhood Plan are intended to accommodate 15 dwellings each, the notional total capacity of these added together is 45 dwellings. This number is referred to in paragraph 4.6 and needs to be changed as a consequence of the above recommended modifications to meet the Basic Conditions.

**Paragraph 4.6 line 7 – add “approximately” before “45”**

Some representors have commented that the Neighbourhood Plan places an overall cap on the amount of housing and that such a ceiling is inappropriately low.

As paragraph 4.6 mentions, the Neighbourhood Plan does not prevent appropriate windfall development and although much of the village is included in the Conservation Area this designation does not rule out suitably designed housing schemes coming forward. Even if only one dwelling per year is developed on windfall sites, i.e. at a rate at the lower end of the recent past performance, this would account for another 17 dwellings by 2031 suggesting an overall total of at least 60 homes in the plan period.



There is therefore some flexibility in the overall amount of housing envisaged and potentially more so with my recommended modifications. I will further consider the scope for flexibility later in my Report. However it is clear to me that the Neighbourhood Plan is proposing to significantly increase the provision of housing in Great Horwood when compared with recent house building rates.

The Framework urges local planning authorities to “*boost significantly the supply of housing...*”<sup>60</sup> Neighbourhood plans are expected to play a supporting role in terms of this, bringing forward sites for residential development. However it appropriately follows that relatively small rural parishes such as Great Horwood will play a modest role, consistent with the achievement of sustainable development.

In Paragraph 4.9 the Neighbourhood Plan states the “*level of housing supply is consistent with the proposed status of Great Horwood as a ‘small village’*”. The paragraph goes on to explain the reasoning for the Parish Council considering this to be the case and that it expects the Neighbourhood Plan “*will inform a review of the District Settlement Hierarchy in this regard*”. As discussed in Section 9 of my Report some representors take exception to these references.

The District Council intends to update the settlement hierarchy work done for the VAP and I consider it conceivable that the Neighbourhood Plan could inform such a review. However the Neighbourhood Plan is not in a position to decide the settlement status of the village; that is a strategic matter for the emerging Local Plan.

As I concluded previously a pragmatic position to take is Great Horwood is relatively small with limited service availability. I therefore recommend the following modification to meet the Basic Conditions:

**Paragraph 4.9 line 2 — delete “*proposed status of Great Horwood as a ‘small village’*” and replace with “*relatively small size of Great Horwood and its limited level of service availability*”**

As referred to in Section 9 of this Report there are interested parties seeking much more significant growth than proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan. There is however no adopted development plan basis for this and no up-to-date published evidence that demonstrates that Great Horwood should play a greater role in providing housing than is envisaged in the Neighbourhood Plan.

I consider the broad quantum housing proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan and capable of being accommodated within the Settlement Boundary consistent with meeting the Basic Conditions.

---

<sup>60</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 47

### *Affordable housing percentage*

Criterion ii of Policy 1 proposes a 35% level of affordable housing should be sought from housing developments within the Settlement Boundary, subject to viability. This in effect is proposed to apply to developments of 15 or fewer dwellings; no lower size threshold is mentioned. However I note that Government policy has recently changed to prohibit the seeking of affordable housing from schemes of 10 dwellings or less<sup>61</sup> except in designated rural areas. Great Horwood Parish does appear to be a designated rural area so there is some scope to seek affordable housing on smaller schemes. My recommendations will need to be considered in the light of this.

Regard will also need to be given to the possibility of sites being subdivided to pass under the minimum size threshold. As discussed in Section 9 of my Report the statutory policy position is in Policy GP2 in the 2004 Local Plan however this relates to larger sites, those of 25 or more dwellings or 1 hectare or more in site area. The Aylesbury Vale Affordable Housing Policy Interim Position Statement is also silent on schemes smaller than these.

I consider the comments made on the Vale of Aylesbury Plan ('VAP') and Stage 1 Community Infrastructure Levy ('CIL') Viability Study in Section 9 and conclude that it is relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan and it is appropriate to have regard to this evidence.

The Parish Housing Survey demonstrates there is a significant need for affordable housing in the Parish. As such the Neighbourhood Plan should aim to meet as much of that need as is possible in terms of the viability of the developments envisaged. A policy without a specific affordable housing target can be ineffectual. However the other policy requirements proposed for at least two of the intended three site allocations are potentially quite onerous. Balanced against this is the stated financial basis of these allocations as being akin to exception sites.

Criterion ii of Policy 1 sets an exact affordable housing requirement of 35%. This would be better set as a maximum target. The criterion already appropriately states the level is "*subject to viability*". However in practice there will also be a "trade off" between the affordable housing requirement and the other policy provisions applicable to the specific site under consideration; especially where the latter requirements are high.

I therefore recommend the following modifications to meet the Basic Conditions:

**Policy 1 criterion ii. – add "*up to*" before "*35%*" and after "*dwellings*" add "*on the whole site*"**

**Paragraph 4.8 line 5 – before "*15*" add "*up to approximately*"**

---

<sup>61</sup> The Planning Practice Guidance – Reference ID: 23b-012-20141128 does allow smaller schemes in "*designated rural areas*" to provide affordable housing. These are areas described under s157(1c) or the Housing Act 1985 (as amended).

Paragraph 4.14 of the Neighbourhood Plan refers to the Aylesbury Vale Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document of 2007. The District Council has pointed out that this Document is no longer in use. So this reference needs to be deleted. I therefore recommend the following modification to meet the Basic Conditions.

**Paragraph 4.14 – Line 1 – add “up to” before “35%”; after “dwellings” add “on a whole site” and after “homes” delete the remainder of the sentence and replace with “,subject to site-specific viability considerations.”**

### *Housing mix*

The Framework states: *“To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:*

- *plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends, and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes);*
- *identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand”* <sup>62</sup>

These are provisions that should also be appropriately embraced, to a degree, in neighbourhood plans.

In the Neighbourhood Plan, aside from affordable housing, Policy 1 refers at criterion iii to making available open market dwelling plots for custom build homes *“if desired”*. As set out above providing for custom build housing is consistent with national policy and advice. However the term *“if desired”* is somewhat ambiguous, being open to misinterpretation. I therefore recommend the following modification to meet the Basic Conditions:

**Policy 1 criterion iii. – delete “, if desired,” and after “custom build” add “if a demand is demonstrated for such units at the time a planning application is made”**

The Policy goes on in criterion iv to appropriately refer to older persons housing. However the Policy does not recognise the other main findings of the Housing Needs Survey – a demand for 2 and 3 bedroom starter homes and medium [sized] family homes. These findings are appropriately recorded in paragraph 4.7 of the Neighbourhood Plan but not reflected in Policy 1.

---

<sup>62</sup> National Planning Policy Framework – Paragraph 50

I therefore recommend the following modification to meet the Basic Conditions:

**Policy 1 after criterion iv. – add an additional criterion – “overall a mix of housing types is provided that is reflective of the most up to date assessment of housing needs arising in the Parish;”**

As a consequence of the above modification I also recommend a further modification to meet the Basic Conditions.

**Paragraph 4.14 line 4 – after “determine” add “after taking into account current housing needs in the Parish”**

Paragraph 4.8 of the Neighbourhood Plan refers in its first sentence to evidence concerning a scheme of 10 – 12 homes. This appears to come from the Parish Housing Survey however that is referring to a scheme or rural exception homes. For the sake of clarity it is recommended that this sentence be deleted to meet the Basic Conditions.

**Paragraph 4.8 – delete first sentence**

#### *Architectural and historic interest*

Criterion v of Policy 1 refers to preservation of the architectural and historic interest of the Great Horwood Conservation Area. English Heritage suggested that instead of the word “preserve” in this criterion the words “sustain or enhance” could be used. English Heritage considers the Neighbourhood Plan overall meets the Basic Conditions however the advantage of using the word ‘sustain’ is that it implies there can be change which Conservation Areas will need to do over time and this is positive whereas ‘preserve’ implies no change. The word ‘enhance’ is also positive.

My conclusion is that I recommend a modification to meet the Basic Conditions:

**Policy 1 criterion v. – replace “preserve” with “sustain or enhance”**

At this point I note that English Heritage and the Buckinghamshire County Council Archaeological Service have suggested a number of minor changes to the Neighbourhood Plan in terms of its coverage of heritage matters generally and archaeology in particular. I understand that these changes are not required to make the Neighbourhood Plan meet the Basic Conditions. Also as at least some of these matters are covered in the saved provisions of the 2004 Local Plan, I do not propose to make any recommendations for modifications, or suggest any other changes in these regards.

### *Publicly accessible open space*

Criterion vi of Policy 1 refers to avoiding any loss of existing publicly accessible open land. Not surprisingly this is a generally supported provision of the Neighbourhood Plan amongst the representors. However Mr Marlow does refer to the field (partly covered by Policy 3 – north of Little Horwood Road) as being used for informal recreational purposes. At the Hearing he accepted that the Green Space Map, produced in response to a point of clarification I requested, accurately shows all the ‘official’ public open recreational space in the Parish and rightly does not include the land north of Little Horwood Road.

I conclude that there is no necessity to recommend any modification to criterion vi of Policy 1.

### *Development outside the Settlement Boundary*

Policy 1 concludes by referring to what types of development are envisaged to be allowed in the countryside outside the Settlement Boundary. Some representors considered these provisions of the Policy to be unduly restrictive, however in some instances such points are made alongside arguments relating to the overall amount of housing development the Neighbourhood Plan proposes and have suggested alternative sites to allocate. I deal with those matters earlier in my Report.

A more particular point was raised was on behalf of the Peter Dean Estate who sought additional criteria concerning opportunities to redevelop previously developed sites where they are located outside the Settlement Boundary. Their representation states *“Policy 1 as proposed does not adequately recognise that support should be offered for the re-use of previously developed land in-line with national policy and the existing development plan in Aylesbury Vale”*

National policy as set out in the Framework does encourage the re-use of previously developed land provided it is not of high environmental value however it also refers to planning recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. There is clearly an appropriate balance to be struck.

The development provisions cited by Peter Dean Estate are Policies GP17 and GP45 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan. The District Council is content that the Neighbourhood Plan is consistent with these policies. I am satisfied these policies do not conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan.

I conclude that there is no necessity to recommend any further modification to Policy 1 for it to meet the Basic Conditions.

## Remaining Policies

I now move on to consider the remaining three Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. Each of these Policies propose land to be allocated for housing development (two of the Policies also propose land for open space uses). All three Policies propose 15 dwellings each. Taking the wording of Policy 1 part i this implies that the net area available for housing development on each site amounts to 0.5 hectares or thereabouts. This is consistent with a dwelling density of 30 per hectare, a density that has attracted very little adverse comment.

From initially looking at the extent of the proposed sites on Inset A of the Policies Map and the recorded sites sizes in the Site Assessment paper it appeared to me that at least two of the sites potentially have a net developable area significantly greater than 0.5 hectares. It was because of this I asked for clarification on site sizes.

The written response to my request published before the Hearing is:

*“Great Horwood Parish Council, as the Qualifying Body submitting the Neighbourhood Plan, wish to provide the following information:*

- *Policy 2 (Land south of Little Horwood Road): the gross site area is 1.3 ha.*
- *Policy 3 (Land north of Little Horwood Road): the gross site area is 1.05 ha, and the net area intended for the village park is 0.40 ha.*
- *Policy 4 (Land off Nash Road): the gross site area is 1.63 ha, and the net area intended for the landscaped amenity is 0.70 ha.”*

This written response is accompanied by maps showing the overall extent of each site at a larger scale than is shown on Inset A.

The response is helpful. From it can be calculated the potential full extent of each site that could, but not necessarily should, be developed for housing after deducting the proposed open space areas. These areas are:

- Policy 2 – 1.3ha
- Policy 3 – 0.65ha
- Policy 4 – 0.93ha

At the Hearing some representors expressed concern that the differences between the actual site sizes and the intended scale of the developments suggests there may have been consequential errors in how the appropriateness of the sites for housing development were assessed. At the Hearing the Parish Council explained the iterative process set out in the evidence base of originally identifying potential housing sites typically significantly larger than 0.5 hectare. Then, how the community preference for developments of about 15 dwelling emerged and that discussions were subsequently held with land owners as to their willingness to release areas of land approximating to that scale. Added to this was a concern to identify defensible boundaries for any sites allocated.

Early in 2014 the Parish Council firmed up proposals for the three development locations that came into the subsequent Neighbourhood Plan. These were consulted on at the 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> March 2014 Community Event. The sketch housing layouts that were presented at this event made clear the intended scale of development – the words “*up to 15 dwellings*” appear on the relevant presentation slides. The 15 dwelling size is also referred in the Site Assessment paper published shortly afterwards

Admittedly the presentation sketch layouts were not intended to be definitive; they only show one way in which each site could be developed. Also the Policy 3 site was a slightly different shape to that subsequently proposed in the submitted Neighbourhood Plan. However the sketch layouts have been informative to local people; particularly so in relation to the Policy 4 site at Nash Road. Here a representor has specifically referred to the sketch layout.

## **Policy 2: Land South of Little Horwood Road**

Policy 2 proposes that 15 dwellings be delivered on this site in the 2020 – 2031 period and that the “*development shall be on the western part of the site adjacent to existing development*”. The sketch layout presented at the March 2014 Community Event shows how the site could be partly developed for this scale of housing.

Clearly development of this site would extend the village in an eastward direction on land that is a continuation of a rounded ridge topped by Little Horwood Road itself but which is already developed on its south side on adjoining land to the west. Concerns have been expressed by some representors as to the concentration of development in this part of Great Horwood (with land opposite also proposed for housing), its prominence in the wider landscape and its impact on the character of the village with its heritage assets.

I am, however, satisfied that with the design provisions in the Policy, an acceptable form of development can be achieved here that is consistent with the existing morphology of the village and without detriment to its character and heritage. Also, balanced against the need to bring forward new housing, I find no overriding reason to hold back development of the site due to the provisions of currently saved Local Plan policies.

The District Council acknowledges the site is suitable for development with its southern extent aligned with that of the existing housing to the west. I consider it appropriate that the site includes land up to the field boundary to the east which is well defined to serve as a long term settlement boundary.

The highway authority has confirmed that the site can be appropriately accessed for the development proposed and that on-street parking on Little Horwood Road is unlikely to occur to such an extent that parking restrictions would be necessary. The existing 30 mph speed limit may need to be extended eastwards but this is not a factor determining the suitability of the site to my mind.

The site owner has confirmed he is the sole freeholder and there are no tenancy, legal or farm access factors that would constrain development of the site, which he is willing to release in the immediate term.

I consider this site presents a number of opportunities for the Neighbourhood Plan to shape and direct the sustainable development of the Parish in a clear and flexible way that remains consistent with the wishes of the community as a whole.

First of all, in line with my previous recommended modifications the 15 dwelling number should be made more approximate. I consider there are no good reasons to hold back development of the western part of the site until 2020 but in line with a community preference for phased development in the village it should be timed for earlier release than the land to the north of Little Horwood Road. This would also help distinguish the two sites from each other instead of them being seen, as they are by some respondents, as a single large development.

Furthermore the western part of the site should be more clearly defined in the Policy wording, and on Inset A of the Policies Map, as a 0.5 hectare parcel allocated for housing. Although there will need to be a landscaped edge to the eastern boundary of this parcel the remainder of the land proposed under Policy 2 should be reserved for housing development if there is a need for such in the longer term.

The advantages of having such a reserve site, with its release strictly controlled, are several. It would provide some flexibility and 'breathing space' to provide for more housing if the emerging Local Plan came to require additional residential development at Great Horwood. In such a circumstance a reserve site would at least reduce the need for a hasty early review of the Neighbourhood Plan and may completely obviate the need for such a review.

If additional housing is not needed to support the Local Plan, as a reserve site, there would be certainty that this 'remainder part' of the Policy 2 land would not be developed until at least a scheduled plan review so providing firm control over its future. If there are no pressing needs to release the reserve site before 2031 then it would remain for any post plan period requirements and in the meantime help ensure the Settlement Boundary endures.

In addition to these Policy changes the language used in the other criteria would benefit from being clearer.

I therefore recommend the following modifications to meet the Basic Conditions.



## **Policy 2 –**

**After “The Neighbourhood Plan allocates” add “0.5 ha of”, before “15” add “approximately” and replace “2020 – 2031” with “before 2020”**

**Before “Development proposals” add “The remainder of the site, as shown on the Policies Map, shall not be developed unless an adopted Local Plan requires additional housing to be provided in Great Horwood or a review of the Neighbourhood Plan allocates this land for housing.”**

**After “Development proposals” add “for the land allocated for housing”**

**Delete criterion i.**

**Criterion v. – replace “adjoining” with “adjacent”**

**On Inset A of the Policies Map the area covered by Policy 2 be amended to show the western part extending to 0.5 ha as being allocated for housing and to show, in contrasting notation, the remaining land to the east designated as a reserve site.**

I recommend the following consequential modifications to meet the Basic Conditions.

**Paragraph 4.17 line 2 – replace “later” with “early”**

**Paragraph 4.18 line 1 – replace “north western” with “northern”**

**Paragraph 4.19 line 1 – replace “The site has the capacity for” with “The part of the site allocated for housing has the capacity for approximately”**

## **Policy 3: Land North of Little Horwood Road**

Policy 3 proposes both housing on the eastern part of the site (within the proposed Settlement Boundary), and a public park on the western part (outside the Settlement Boundary). The latter almost adjoins the Conservation Area and a pair of semi-detached houses of local architectural and historical interest. The site comprises a small part of a pasture field that exhibits ridge and furrow earthworks – features of heritage significance but with no statutory protection. The site fronts Little Horwood Road and abuts a bounded field access at its western end but otherwise its other boundaries are not marked by features on the ground.

This land is similarly located to the Policy 2 site opposite and likewise its development would extend the village in an eastward direction along the rounded ridge top. Concerns have been expressed by some representors as to the concentration of development in this part of Great Horwood (with land opposite also proposed for housing), its prominence in the wider

landscape (made worse by the lack of a presently defined northern boundary) and its impact on the character of the village with its heritage assets. A further concern is that it could lead to additional, 'backland' development further to the north.

Some representors have questioned the appropriateness of proposing a public park here in terms of the impact on the vibrancy of the village and the street scene, the lack of historical context for such an open space, along with adverse affects it could have on the heritage of the locally listed houses and the setting of wider the Conservation Area. Furthermore some representators have expressed serious concerns about the financial effect of providing a public park on the viability of the proposed 15 dwelling housing development. More fundamentally some representors have grave doubts as to whether the provision of a public park would comply with the planning obligations tests (referenced in Section 9 of this Report).

From a design point of view, I am satisfied that with the provisions in the Policy, an acceptable form of development can be achieved here that is consistent with the existing morphology of the village and without detriment to its character and heritage. There is precedence for linear development on the north side of Little Horwood Road further west into the village. Appropriate siting of new homes will also help stop pressure for any 'backland' development.

It is unfortunate that some of the ridge and furrow earthworks would be lost through development however it would be a small part of a wider feature which, within the park area, could be retained with sympathetic treatment. I accept the need for a park in this part of the village given the shortage of recreational land that is conveniently located to most people. I am not persuaded by arguments it would detract from the vibrancy of the village centre or be an incongruous feature here.

On the contrary I conclude that a public open space here with appropriately sympathetic treatment would complement the street scene, preserve longer distance views northwards, and help maintain the setting of the adjoining heritage assets. It follows that the provision of such an open space is necessary to make the housing development acceptable in planning terms and is directly related to the development. However I am not satisfied that a fully implemented public park would be a fair and reasonable obligation to place on the development.

Overall, balanced against the need to bring forward new housing, I find no overriding reason to hold back development of the site due to the provisions of currently saved Local Plan policies. The District Council has no concerns in principle about the site being allocated for development.

The highway authority has confirmed that the site can be appropriately accessed for the development proposed and that on-street parking on Little Horwood Road is unlikely to occur to such an extent that parking restrictions would be necessary. The existing 30 mph speed limit may need to be extended eastwards but this is not a factor determining the suitability of the site to my mind.

The site owner has confirmed he is the sole freeholder and that there are no tenancy or legal factors that would constrain development of the site, which he is willing to release at any time. However, the land owner did ask at the Hearing for a wider farm accessway to conveniently reach his remaining farm land. The gross site area covered by Policy 3 is 1.05 ha; with the park intended to extend to 0.4ha. As to the remaining area of 0.65ha, this can be appropriately split 0.5ha for housing and the remainder for farm access.

The effect of the public park on the viability of the housing development (aside from the affordable housing matter considered earlier in my Report) and the wider question of the appropriateness of seeking a planning obligation for delivering the open space are closely related aspects. They can be effectively resolved by tying the Policy directly to the third planning obligation test such that the 'call' upon the development in delivering the public park is in proportion in terms of its the scale and kind to that of the housing scheme. This may mean the development could legitimately secure the land for the park and part fund its implementation as a simple open space. As resources become available from other sources further facilities could be added to the park.

On such a basis I consider the provisions of Policy 3 would be reasonably framed and deliverable.

I therefore recommend the following modifications to meet the Basic Conditions.

#### **Policy 3 –**

***After “The Neighbourhood Plan allocates” add “0.5 ha of”, before “15” add “approximately”, after “new village park” add “, subject to the provision of the latter being fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed housing development”.***

***Criterion ii. – at the start add “0.4 ha of”, after “gap” delete “shall be designed” and replace with “is allocated”***

***Criterion xi. – at the start add “Improved” and delete “to both fields”***

***On Inset A of the Policies Map the area covered by Policy 3 be amended to show the western part extending to 0.4 ha as being allocated for a public park and to show, in contrasting notation, 0.5 ha to the east allocated for housing and the remaining land reserved for farm access only, adjusting the Settlement Boundary accordingly to include within the village only the land allocated for housing.***

***Paragraph 4.23 line 1 – replace “The site has the capacity for” with “The part of the site allocated for housing has the capacity for approximately”***

***Paragraph 4.25 line 1 – delete “laid out and completed” and replace with “provided to the extent that is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed housing development”***

#### **Policy 4: Land off Nash Road**

Policy 4 proposes housing provision of 15 dwellings within the southern part of the site (within the proposed Settlement boundary) and a landscape amenity area is envisaged occupying the northern part of the site, outside of the Settlement Boundary. The gross area of the site is 1.63 hectares, of which 0.7 hectares is intended for the landscaped amenity area.

This land is located on the northern edge of the village to the west of Nash Road. The site slopes from a high point in the south down to small stream on the northern boundary. The land is predominantly bordered by hedgerows and trees on the western, northern and eastern boundaries although the latter is partly open to Nash Road. The southern boundary, which is not screened by vegetation, abuts the gardens of two residential properties and also forms the northernmost extent of the Conservation Area.

Concerns have been expressed by some representors about the potential adverse impact of the proposed development on the setting of the Conservation Area and a nearby listed building (Manor Farm), as well as on the character of the village and open land beyond, the effect on amenity and privacy enjoyed by the residents of the adjoining dwellings, and loss of ridge and furrow earthworks. The site is partly within an Archaeological Notification Area.

Representors have also voiced concerns about the ability to appropriately access the site and safely reach the village on foot using the existing footway that twice switches from one side of the carriageway to the other. Further concerns raised are those concerning viability and appropriateness of the site proposals in respect of saved Local Plan policies aimed at minimising the visual impact of new development.

I consider the key to mitigating the visual impact of developing this site is to avoid developing the highest southernmost part of the site. This can be ensured by providing a substantial landscaped buffer, as is already proposed in the Policy, but which would benefit from greater clarity in the Neighbourhood Plan as to its scale and positioning. The size of the site is such that over 0.4ha can be devoted to this and still leave the 0.5ha necessary for the housing development.

I further consider such a buffer, suitably landscaped, would mitigate any adverse impact of new housing on the setting of the Conservation Area and would maintain the amenity and privacy enjoyed by the residents of the neighbouring dwellings. The latter would be further safeguarded by orientating new dwellings closest to the southern boundary to face east/west rather than north/south.

I conclude the Policy needs to be slightly clearer in relation to safeguarding the setting of the listed Manor Farm. In terms of other heritage matters there would be some limited loss of ridge and furrow earthworks where the land is developed for housing but they could be retained elsewhere on the site. English Heritage has not objected to the loss of this feature on the site. In terms of archaeological notification the Policy already makes provision for this in respect of survey work requirements.

The District Council expressed some concerns about this site at the pre-submission consultation stage. However at the Hearing the authority representatives confirmed that the site can be appropriately developed because a high standard of design is now required by the Policy. Overall, balanced against the need to bring forward new housing, I find no overriding reason to hold back development of the site due to the provisions of currently saved Local Plan policies.

The highway authority has confirmed that the site can be appropriately accessed by the creation of a road junction towards the southern end of the site. This would mean that the existing hedge and hedgerow trees fronting Nash Road would have to be removed to provide the necessary sight lines and embankment would need to be re-contoured. The highway authority is also satisfied that the safe footpath connections to the village centre can be provided.

The site owner has confirmed he is the sole freeholder and there are no tenancy, legal or farm access factors that would constrain development of the site, which he willing to release in the immediate term.

The remaining matter to consider is whether the proposals in Policy 4 can be viably delivered. Aside from the affordable housing provisions considered earlier in my Report the key considerations hinge on the landscaping provisions – the landscaped area to the north and the landscape buffer to the south. I consider both these proposals are necessary to make the residential development acceptable in planning terms and directly related to the proposed housing. However the extent that the landscaping proposals would be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind of the development would depend on the actual works involved.

The landscaped area to the north ought to include a substantially planted boundary to the housing development to help define and reinforce the Settlement Boundary however the remaining land could serve as an amenity function, at least initially, by being left largely open. It could also conveniently be used to accommodate a sustainable drainage pond if that is required. Later should the Parish Council want to do more here, that should, I suggest, be made subject to funding from other sources – see Section 11 of my Report.

I consider that the proposed landscape buffer meets all the planning obligation tests and ought to become owned by the Parish Council and come with a commuted sum for maintenance. The option of having a footpath link from the southern part of the site to the village green (criterion xvii) should be retained. Although there would need to be a link across third party land a footpath could probably be appropriately routed through the substantial landscape buffer I envisage.

I therefore recommend the following modifications to meet the Basic Conditions:

**Policy 4 –**

**After “*The Neighbourhood Plan allocates*” add “*0.5 ha of*” and before “*15*” add “*approximately*”**

**Criterion ii. – Delete “*assess*” and replace with “*respect*”**

**Criterion iv. – After “*A landscape buffer*” add “*of 0.4 ha, as shown on the Policies Map,*” and after “*Conservation Area*” add “*and to safeguard the amenity and privacy enjoyed by neighbouring residents. The land for the buffer shall be transferred to the Parish Council with a commuted sum to cover future maintenance;*”**

**Criterion v. – Delete “*shall be designed*” and replace with “*is allocated*” and after “*amenity*” add “*, as shown on the Policies Map, be provided to the extent that is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed housing development,*”**

**Criterion xv. – Delete “*consider views; to*” and delete “*; and to maximise benefits of south facing gardens and*” replace latter with “*through appropriate*”**

**On Inset A of the Policies Map the area covered by Policy 4 be amended to show the southernmost part extending to 0.4 ha as being allocated for a landscape buffer and to show, in contrasting notation, 0.5 ha further north allocated for housing and the remaining land allocated as a landscaped amenity area, adjusting the Settlement Boundary accordingly to include within the village only the land allocated for housing and the landscape buffer.**

Partly as a consequence of the above modifications I also recommend the following modifications to meet the Basic Conditions:

**Paragraph 4.28 – Delete the second sentence and replace with “*To achieve acceptable sight lines the vehicular access to serve the proposed housing shall be positioned to the south of the present gated access.*”**

**Other sites put forward by representors**

Several representors have referred to other land they wish to see be brought forward for residential development. However, I have found that Policies 2, 3 and 4, subject to my recommended modifications, meet the Basic Conditions and the existence of other sites, irrespective of their suitability, is not something against which the Neighbourhood Plan is examined.

## 11.The Plan — Implementation

I now refer to Section 5 – Implementation - of the Neighbourhood Plan. At the Hearing the Parish Council representatives confirmed that Proposal 1 is not intended for inclusion in the development plan and is therefore outside my remit to examine. As a non-statutory element it will be much easier for the Parish Council to review and amend the list of infrastructure projects should circumstances change or better information on requirements become known.

In this regard and in line with my recommended modifications concerning the open space proposals in Policies 3 and 4 I however suggest that the Parish Council consider adding a commitment to spend further monies on these proposals.

My other only suggestions here are that the number '1' be deleted from the heading as there is now only one 'Proposal' and that the typeface be changed to distinguish the projects listed from the text contained in the four Policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

## 12.Conclusion

In completing this examination, I have recommended a number of modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan. Subject to these, I am satisfied the Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

Subject to modifications proposed I recommend that the **Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a Referendum.**

I am also required to consider whether the Referendum Area should extend beyond the Designated Area for the Neighbourhood Plan – Great Horwood Parish. I consider Designated Area to be appropriate and no evidence or representations have been submitted that justify to me that this is not the case.

I therefore recommend that the **Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a Referendum based on the Area as designated by Aylesbury Vale District Council on 10 September 2012.**

**DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN THE EXAMINATION**

- National Planning Policy Framework (27 March 2012)
- Planning Practice Guidance (6 March 2014 as later amended)
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)
- Localism Act 2011
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012
- European Convention on Human Rights
- Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan Submission Plan
- Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map and Inset A
- Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement
- Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement
- Consultation Statement Appendices (including Regulation 14 Report)
- Consultation Responses (Reg 14)
- Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2014—2031 Sustainability Appraisal
- Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2014—2031 Site Assessment (2014)
- Aylesbury Vale Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2013) (Great Horwood sites)
- Great Horwood Parish Housing Survey (2014)
- Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan Spatial Policy: Site Size (2014)
- State of the Parish Report December 2013
- Great Horwood Community View (2011)
- Presentation given at the Public Meeting on 18 May 2013
- Great Horwood Parish Community Event (2014) and presentation
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Screen Report – February 2014
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report February 2014
- Response to Scoping Report from English Heritage
- Response to Scoping Report from the Environment Agency
- Response to Scoping Report from Natural England
- Great Horwood Conservation Area Review (2012)
- Aylesbury Vale Settlement Hierarchy Assessment (2012)
- Aylesbury Vale Settlement Hierarchy Assessment: A Critique (2014)
- Great Horwood Parish Historic Town Assessment (2012)
- Vale of Aylesbury Plan: Publication (2012)
- Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (2004)
- Aylesbury Vale Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2012)



- Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment: Horwood Claylands (2008)
- Neighbourhood Planning Team Terms of Reference (revised)
- Aylesbury Vale Affordable Housing Policy Interim Position Statement – June 2014
- Vale of Aylesbury Plan ('VAP') and Stage 1 Community Infrastructure Levy ('CIL') Viability Study – September 2012
- Representations made to the Submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Representations made to the above Viability Study
- Responses to my points of clarification:
  - Green Space Map (showing publicly accessible open space in Great Horwood)
  - Text and map details of gross and net sizes of the sites referred to Policies 2, 3 and 4

## LIST OF RECOMMENDED MODIFICATIONS IN PLAN ORDER

## Policy 1 –

Criterion i. – delete first *“no more than”* and replace with *“up to approximately”* before *“15”*; delete second *“no more than”* and replace with *“up to about”* before *“0.5”*

Criterion ii. – add *“up to”* before *“35%”* and after *“dwellings”* add *“on the whole site”*

Criterion iii. – delete *“, if desired,”* and after *“custom build”* add *“if a demand is demonstrated for such units at the time a planning application is made”*

After criterion iv. – add an additional criterion – *“overall a mix of housing types is provided that is reflective of the most up to date assessment of housing needs arising in the Parish”*

Criterion v. – replace *“preserve”* with *“sustain or enhance”*

Paragraph 4.6 line 7 – add *“approximately”* before *“45”*

Paragraph 4.8 –  
Delete first sentence

Line 5 – before *“15”* add *“up to approximately”*

Paragraph 4.9 line 2 — delete *“proposed status of Great Horwood as a ‘small village’”* and replace with *“relatively small size of Great Horwood and its limited level of service availability”*

Paragraph 4.12 lines 3 & 4 – add *“approximately”* before *“15”*; delete *“no more than”* and replace with *“up to about”* before *“0.5”*

Paragraph 4.14 –

Line 1 – add *“up to”* before *“35%”*; after *“dwellings”* add *“on a whole site”* and after *“homes”* delete the remainder of the sentence and replace with *“,subject to site-specific viability considerations”*

Line 4 – after *“determine”* add *“after taking into account current housing needs in the Parish”*

## Policy 2 –

After *“The Neighbourhood Plan allocates”* add *“0.5 ha of”*, before *“15”* add *“approximately”* and replace *“2020 – 2031”* with *“before 2020”*

Before *“Development proposals”* add *“The remainder of the site, as shown on the Policies Map, shall not be developed unless an adopted Local Plan requires additional housing to be provided in Great Horwood or a review of the Neighbourhood Plan allocates this land for housing.”*

After *“Development proposals”* add *“for the land allocated for housing”*

Delete criterion i.

Criterion v. – replace *“adjoining”* with *“adjacent”*

On Inset A of the Policies Map the area covered by Policy 2 be amended to show the western part extending to 0.5 ha as being allocated for housing and to show, in contrasting notation, the remaining land to the east designated as a reserve site.

Paragraph 4.17 line 2 – replace *“later”* with *“early”*

Paragraph 4.18 line 1 – replace *“north western”* with *“northern”*

Paragraph 4.19 line 1 – replace *“The site has the capacity for”* with *“The part of the site allocated for housing has the capacity for approximately”*

## Policy 3 –

After *“The Neighbourhood Plan allocates”* add *“0.5 ha of”*, before *“15”* add *“approximately”*, after *“new village park”* add *“,subject to the provision of the latter being fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed housing development”*.

Criterion ii. – at the start add *“0.4 ha of”*; after *“gap”* delete *“shall be designed”* and replace with *“is allocated”*

Criterion xi. – at the start add *“Improved”* and delete *“to both fields”*

On Inset A of the Policies Map the area covered by Policy 3 be amended to show the western part extending to 0.4 ha as being allocated for a public park and to show, in contrasting notation, 0.5 ha to the east allocated for housing

and the remaining land reserved for farm access only, adjusting the Settlement Boundary accordingly to include within the village only the land allocated for housing.

Paragraph 4.23 line 1 – replace *“The site has the capacity for”* with *“The part of the site allocated for housing has the capacity for approximately”*

Paragraph 4.25 line 1 – delete *“laid out and completed”* and replace with *“provided to the extent that is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed housing development”*

#### Policy 4 –

After *“The Neighbourhood Plan allocates”* add *“0.5 ha of”* and before *“15”* add *“approximately”*

Criterion ii. – Delete *“assess”* and replace with *“respect”*

Criterion iv. – After *“A landscape buffer”* add *“of 0.4 ha, as shown on the Policies Map,”* and after *“Conservation Area”* add *“and to safeguard the amenity and privacy enjoyed by neighbouring residents. The land for the buffer shall be transferred to the Parish Council with a commuted sum to cover future maintenance;”*

Criterion v. – Delete *“shall be designed”* and replace with *“is allocated”* and after *“amenity”* add *“, as shown on the Policies Map, be provided to the extent that is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed housing development”*

Criterion xv. – Delete *“consider views; to”* and delete *“; and to maximise benefits of south facing gardens and”* replace latter with *“through appropriate”*

On Inset A of the Policies Map the area covered by Policy 4 be amended to show the southernmost part extending to 0.4 ha as being allocated for a landscape buffer and to show, in contrasting notation, 0.5 ha further north allocated for housing and the remaining land allocated as a landscaped amenity area, adjusting the Settlement Boundary accordingly to include within the village only the land allocated for housing and the landscape buffer.

Paragraph 4.28 – Delete the second sentence and replace with *“To achieve acceptable sight lines the vehicular access to serve the proposed housing shall be positioned to the south of the present gated access.”*

Julian Richard Jackson

Independent Examiner

REPORT ENDS