

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan sets out planning policies for the neighbourhood area. Written by the local community, a Neighbourhood Plan helps to ensure the community gets the right type of development, in the right place. The limitation of a Neighbourhood Plan is that it only has any influence or meaning for issues that relate to planning.

In the words of the .gov.uk website:

‘Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. [...] Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to plan for the right types of development to meet their community’s needs and where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.’ ([Neighbourhood planning - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk))

So the process gives our community a say in any development and growth, but the crucial bit comes at the end of the quote – our ambitions must be ‘aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area’. For us, this means that our plan must be aligned with the Plan: MK, which is the local development plan that was adopted by MK Council in March 2019.

Why do we need a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan for our Parish gives us a voice in any developments that are proposed for the area. It’s a statement of our community’s desires and wishes, which should be taken into account when any planning proposals are considered. It takes into consideration the needs of local residents as stated in the Housing Needs Survey. If we have an approved Neighbourhood Plan in place, we will have greater protection from speculative planning applications in the future. Without a Neighbourhood Plan, it would be unrealistic to expect to defend a position of the parish having no development at all in the coming years and we would be much more vulnerable to developments that we do not want.

What area is covered by the Neighbourhood Plan?

The Neighbourhood Plan area is defined by the boundary of Haversham cum Little Linford Parish, shown here in this map:

<http://havershamtlinford.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Parish-boundary-map.pdf>

Does an approved Neighbourhood Plan mean that developments will definitely follow?

Not necessarily, but given the current pressure at national level for new housing this is very likely to have a direct effect on us. Given that most of the advice received up to this point has suggested that it is unrealistic to expect or defend a position of no development at all in the coming decades, the Parish Council believe that agreeing a shared vision in a Neighbourhood Plan is a wise and prudent process.

So will the Parish Council be able to control any housing development in Haversham?

The Neighbourhood Plan will help us to influence what goes on with any housing development in Haversham. Without it our influence is minimal. However, planning decisions are made by our local planning authority, Milton Keynes Council, and subject to national guidelines but the Neighbourhood Plan is going to give us our best chance of influencing what happens.

Will the Neighbourhood Plan get the community new facilities, like a shop, or community centre?

As the regulations stand at the moment, with any new building developments the community may receive money from the developers. This money, known as Planning Gain or sometimes 'S106 money', may be used by the community to develop local facilities. However, the amount of money is proportional to the size of any development so it would need a very large housing development to provide enough money for any new community facilities.

Will the Neighbourhood Plan control traffic through the village or improve bus services?

No. Traffic management and public transport provision are outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan.

Who is responsible for preparing the Plan?

At the start of the process, the Parish Council formed a Steering Group of Parish Councillors and local residents to undertake the work of researching and preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. They are helped by consultants O'Neill Homer who are largely paid by way of a government grant.

Why has it taken so long to get to this stage?

Preparing a Neighbourhood Plan is a technical and complex issue with several stages that need to be completed before final submission. The creation of a carefully made plan that conforms to the requirements of national policy and takes full account of the community's wishes takes time. It is also slowed down by the fact that, with the exception of a little bit of our Parish Clerk's time and our bought-in consultant, the whole process is run by volunteers, who have other commitments and calls on their time. Those of us on the Steering Group would all like to have made more rapid progress but unfortunately illness, work issues, the sheer volume of work and, of course, Covid have all played their part in creating delays.

How do the Steering Group know what the Parish wants?

The Steering Group have been guided by the views of residents made at the initial public meeting (March 2018), the community questionnaire (July 2018), the housing needs survey (August 2019) and the latest consultation paper and questionnaire (November 2020). Part of the responsibility of the Steering Group is to take on board the comments from parishioners and make recommendations on how as many as possible can be delivered within the framework of a Neighbourhood Plan.

We know why we can't have a community meeting at the moment but why didn't you have an online meeting e.g. on Zoom?

Under normal circumstances, in place of the November 2020 paper consultation, we would have held a community meeting -possibly more than one -to present the draft policies and the information about possible development sites. That would have given everyone the opportunity to give feedback on the proposals. Unfortunately, due to Covid, that was not possible. The possibility of an online meeting was debated at length by the Steering Group but we felt that a document going through every door in the parish was the best way to ensure everyone could access the same information and no-one would be disadvantaged due to technology limitations.

The November consultation document identified five specific sites for possible development. How did you select those sites?

All 28 landowners who have land adjoining the existing settlement areas of New Haversham and Old Haversham were contacted to find out if they had any interest in their land being put forward. Little Linford was considered too small to be within scope for the Neighbourhood Plan. Eleven landowners responded to this 'call for sites' and told us they had land they would like to be considered for development. After careful analysis and assessment against a set of agreed criteria (see below), five sites remained and were put forward in the consultation document.

The criteria were based on responses from the original community questionnaire (July 2018) which made clear that residents were concerned that any new development must:

- Be small in size
- Preserve the character of the village
- Preserve local biodiversity
- Not significantly worsen the existing traffic congestion
- Deliver low energy, low carbon footprint housing.

You can find further details of the selection process in the 2020 consultation document [insert link].

Why was there only one site in New Haversham and four in Old Haversham?

Of the original 28 landowners approached and the 11 responses received, only one put forward a site in New Haversham; no New Haversham sites were eliminated during the selection process.

Did you consider the environmental impact of development at these five sites?

Milton Keynes Council indicated that they did not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) at this stage for any of the sites. (An SEA is usually only required for larger development plans and programmes.) However, our consultants, O'Neill Homer, undertook an informal technical assessment on all five sites and there is an overview in the 2020 consultation document. MK Council will undertake any further analysis they believe is necessary when they receive the draft Neighbourhood Plan or following consultation with statutory bodies.

Did you consider traffic, flooding and access to mains drainage?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a planning document and floodwater, drainage and traffic problems such as speeding are not planning issues, except as they relate to a particular development proposal. To try to address residents' concerns about traffic, there is a suggested policy about traffic in the Plan which will inform any future planning decisions. Any proposed development site would have to be viable with regard to flood risk, wastewater disposal etc. as part of the normal planning process.

What happens next?

The next stage is for the Steering Group to complete the draft Neighbourhood Plan with the help of our consultants. This will include the proposed policies and the site or sites -if any – they believe most fit the needs and objectives of the community, based on all the information, research and consultation that has been undertaken. Once completed, the Plan must be signed off by the Parish Council before it is submitted to Milton Keynes Council, the local planning authority. They'll check that we've followed the correct procedures and may make some recommendations, ask for changes etc before putting it out for consultation, including to statutory bodies (e.g. Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, neighbouring parish councils).

Once both the Parish Council and MK Council are happy with the Neighbourhood Plan, it will be presented to an independent examiner to check that the plan meets the 'basic conditions' and decide if the Plan can proceed to public referendum. At referendum, all voters in the parish can decide whether they accept or reject the final Plan. If more than 50% of votes cast are in favour of the Plan, it must be taken into account in planning decisions.

What if I don't agree with the Neighbourhood Plan?

You will ultimately be able to have your say in the referendum at the end of the development process of the Plan and the majority result of the referendum will decide whether or not the Plan is adopted. In addition, there will be several public consultation points during the process.

If you don't agree with the process by which the Neighbourhood Plan has been developed, you can raise your concerns with Haversham-cum-Litford Parish Councillors or our Milton Keynes ward councillors. The Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are being advised through this process by experienced consultants as developing a Neighbourhood Plan is quite technical and complicated.

To find out more about Neighbourhood Planning in general, go to:

[Neighbourhood planning - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning)

or [Home -Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#)