



# Hockliffe Neighbourhood Plan

2018-2035

Consultation Draft January 2019

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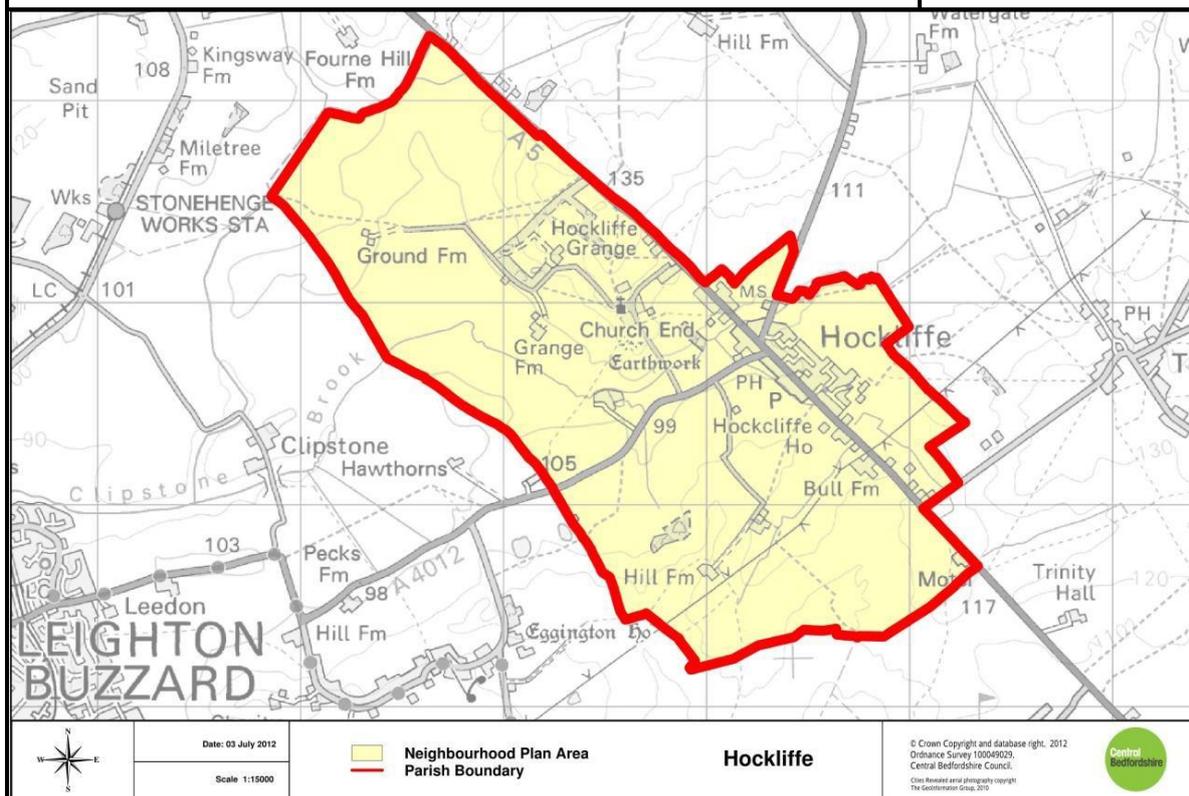
## Vision

**In 15 years, Hockliffe will be a vibrant, thriving community with sufficient housing in all categories and access to employment and leisure facilities thereby creating a safe and sustainable neighbourhood. The adverse impact of traffic on the A5 and A4012 on the lives and general well-being of residents will be considerably reduced.**

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. In 2011, the Localism Act introduced a new opportunity for local communities to shape their future formally as part of the planning system. Neighbourhood Plans can be produced by Parish Councils and when they have gone through all the required steps and processes, they become part of the development plan for the area. This means that any planning applications will have to take account of policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan. It also provides local people with a say on how land use and buildings can develop over time, such as protecting open spaces and improving local character.
- 1.2. Producing a Neighbourhood Plan is a formal process involving several stages, governed by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, but critically important is that the Plan is developed with continuing community involvement. In order to rigorously test the policies of a Neighbourhood Plan, an independent Examination is carried out. The Neighbourhood Plan must conform to the following 'basic conditions':
  - be consistent with local planning policy;
  - demonstrate how the plan will contribute towards sustainable development;
  - have regard to national policy;
  - be in general conformity with strategic local policy;
  - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - be compatible with EU obligations; and
  - meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.
- 1.3. Once the Plan has passed Examination, it is voted upon in a referendum by Parish residents and if a simple majority 'yes' vote is achieved, then the Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' by Central Bedfordshire Council and comes into force as a planning document with legal weight in decision-making.
- 1.4. Hockliffe Parish Council decided in 2015 that a Neighbourhood Plan could build on work carried out by the Parish Council to improve the community facilities for Hockliffe's residents. It would also be able to influence land use and planning issues in the area, particularly as a new Local Plan was beginning to be produced by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC). Accordingly, the Neighbourhood Area for Hockliffe was designated in March 2015, encompassing the whole of Hockliffe Parish.

## Neighbourhood Plan Area – coincides with Parish Boundary



## 2. The Strategic Policy Context

### The National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Revised Version) was published in July 2018 and sets out the Government's approach to sustainable development. At the heart of the NPPF is the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. Essentially, it is about positive growth with economic, social and environmental gains being sought simultaneously through the planning system. Neighbourhood planning forms part of the NPPF approach to planning, to allow local communities to shape sustainable development within their area and to enable local communities to address their strategic needs and priorities. The NPPF states that Neighbourhood Plans should set out a positive vision for the future of the local area with planning policies to determine decisions on planning applications, including policies which set out the quality of development that should be expected for the area, based on stated objectives for the area's future and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. However, a Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and plan positively to support these policies.

## Sustainable development

- 2.2. The Neighbourhood Plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF states that pursuing sustainable development includes making it easier to create jobs in villages, promote gains in biodiversity, achieve better quality design, improve people's quality of life, and provide a wider choice of high quality homes.
- 2.3. Therefore, the aims, objectives, policies and proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan should be assessed against their ability to achieve sustainable development. Wherever possible the Plan should actively promote the achievement of sustainable development.

## Local Plans & Green Belt

- 2.4. The current Local Plan currently consists of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan (adopted 2004). Some of these policies remain relevant and will continue to be used in deciding planning applications until the emerging Local Plan covering the whole of Central Bedfordshire is adopted. This Local Plan determined the extent of the Green Belt around Hockliffe. Essentially, the built up area of Hockliffe is surrounded by Green Belt which means that any new development outside the built up area also has to conform to Green Belt policies. The boundaries of the Green Belt can be altered by a Local Plan review and this is the approach that the emerging Central Bedfordshire Plan is taking, to ensure that sufficient housing land is available up until 2035.
- 2.5. The general extent of the Green Belt is a strategic matter. However, paragraph 136 of the NPPF states that *'Where a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries has been established through strategic policies, detailed amendments to those boundaries may be made through non-strategic policies, including neighbourhood plans.'*
- 2.6. This Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared to take account of the existing Local Plan and the emerging draft Local Plan. CBC issued a consultation draft in July 2017 and it has been submitted for Examination. It is anticipated that the Local Plan will be subject to formal Hearing by a Planning Inspector in Spring 2019 and finally adopted in mid-2019.
- 2.7. The new Local Plan sets out:
  - the preferred strategy for growth;
  - a range of sites for new homes and jobs, with proposals informed by new transport infrastructure and consideration of environmental enhancement and protection;
  - up-to-date policies to guide new development reflecting national guidance & legislation;
  - a need for changes to Green Belt boundaries to achieve sufficient housing growth.
- 2.8. Although the figures are likely to be subject to change, earlier work on the emerging Local Plan is based on a projected need of a further 20,000 dwellings over the period 2015 – 35, in addition to the 23,000 houses which have already been allocated or have planning permission. Hockliffe is defined as "a large village" in the draft Local Plan, able to absorb further development. This Neighbourhood Plan recognises that, subject to investment in essential community infrastructure, Hockliffe is an appropriate location for some new housing.
- 2.9. The Local Plan currently allocates 3 sites at Hockliffe totalling 141 houses. They are:
  - Land to the South West of the A5 HAS24 (77 houses);
  - Land at Leighton Road HAS25 (23 houses); and
  - A5 Watling Street HAS26 (41 houses).

## Other relevant CBC documents

### CBC Community Plans

- 2.10. Central Bedfordshire Council is developing a community plan in partnership with town and parish councils, local residents, interest groups and stakeholders. Whilst the Local Plan will provide the overall approach to sustainable growth and some allocations for community facilities, infrastructure, homes, employment and so on, community plans will focus on these needs at a more local level.

### Local Transport Plan

- 2.11. Hockliffe is a linear village dominated by the A5 trunk road, a strategic link of national importance, which is the responsibility of Highways England.
- 2.12. The Local Transport Plan sets out the following priority locations for action in Hockliffe:
- Congestion at A5/A4012 junction creates air quality issues and poor pedestrian crossings.
  - Narrow pavements and on-street parking at the school create a poor pedestrian environment.
  - Volume/speed of traffic results in poor pedestrian and cycling environment in the village.
  - Poor pedestrian permeability across the A5 to the south of the village.
  - Poor sightlines at junction between Hockliffe Road (B5120) and the A5, creating a road safety hazard.
- 2.13. Unfortunately, scope for influencing Highways England matters are limited in Neighbourhood Plans. Under these circumstances, the Parish Council will work as closely as possible with concerned local residents, Central Bedfordshire Council and Highways England to find some solutions and improvements to the current situation. At the time of writing Highways England has agreed in principle to some significant improvements.

### Leisure Strategy

- 2.14. No shortfalls in sports and playing facilities are identified for the Parish which has good quality facilities for formal playspaces. The main issues are that access is limited for the whole village due to the location of the Recreation ground and that there are only 2 small informal open spaces.



## 3. Hockliffe Parish Description

- 3.1. Hockliffe is a village which straddles the A5 trunk road between Dunstable to the south and Milton Keynes to the north. There are around 820 residents making up 350 households (data from 2011 Census). There is a village school, the White Hart Harvester restaurant, a village store and post office, McDonald's, a roadside hotel with eatery, and several businesses including retail, light industry and motor trade.

### History and Heritage

- 3.2. The village and surrounding parish are an important historic location. The earliest archaeological finds have included Bronze age axes. The crossroads were originally a Roman motorway service station on North-South Watling Street crossing an East-West route from East Anglia to the west.
- 3.3. Hockliffe itself developed as a Saxon stronghold, when in AD367, a Saxon pirate called Hocga sufficiently provoked some Celts that they drove him south, over Hadrian's Wall to this ridge where he stopped to defend himself on this "cliff" – hence "Hocga's Cliff" or Hockliffe.
- 3.4. A Saxon settlement grew up on the fields below the church where a series of ponds along the top of the ridge enabled cattle to be watered whilst keeping a good watch for marauders and other threats. The Saxon High Street, Church Lane, runs from the A5 to the church site and on towards The Grange. It is flanked by hedges of Midland thorn which only occurs in "ancient" hedgerow, defined as Saxon or earlier. There is a well-defined Holloway to a willow tree in a dip worn away on the original market place. Saxon cultivation terraces and house platforms on the field below the church predate the mediaeval ridge & furrow in the fields surrounding the church. Four Saxon bodies were unearthed in a recent archaeological dig.
- 3.5. After the Saxons came the Normans. William the Conqueror was in the habit of granting land in exchange for raising armies and building castles; but he imposed a condition: the nobleman had to build a church of certain dimensions - the chancel to be 14ft x 15ft; and the nave 40 ft. The footprint of St Nicholas before the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Century alterations matched these dimensions. The mound and moat of a motte and bailey castle are still visible. This would have become the moated Manor House.
- 3.6. In later times, as a mediaeval coaching village, there were 13 hostelries on the Watling Street. Only one of these now remains, The White Hart at the crossroads, which is part of a national chain of restaurants. In Mediaeval times, Church End failed to develop at the same rate as the ribbon strip on the Watling Street, chiefly because of the trade opportunities for hostelries on the main road; but also perhaps because of a plague burial ground in the garden of the adjacent thatched cottage, the Crow's Nest.



- 3.7. The area surrounding the church and mediaeval village green was designated as the Hockliffe Church End Conservation Area in 2004. (No Conservation Area Appraisal is available.) It includes the earthworks of a mediaeval castle, (Church Farm moated site and associated settlement and cultivation earthworks, List entry Number: 1012915). There are also several Grade 2 listed houses on Watling Street and in Church End.
- 3.8. In the post-war era, several side streets and closes have been built. Woburn Road, Birches Close, Ninelands, Church Lane and Manor Avenue all included a number of council houses and a row of bungalows for the elderly was added in Kilby Road.
- 3.9. Since 1980, White Horse Close, Hockley Court, Augustus Road, Blackbirds, an extension to Manor Avenue, Gilpin Court, and most recently Clifford Close have further added to the private housing stock in the village. These houses are pre-dominantly 2 and 3 bedroomed, with a considerable number of starter homes.

## Landscape

- 3.10. Hockliffe is part of the Toddington – Hockliffe Clay Hills, a large area of connected rounded hills extending from Toddington to Leighton Buzzard. (Central Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2015).
- 3.11. It is a ‘medium scale’ landscape defined by a series of connected (subtle) hills (e.g. around Church End) separating low-lying vales, (including the valley of the Clipstone Brook). It is an agricultural landscape, with a mix of arable land and pasture with a strong pattern of fields defined by hedgerows punctuated by mature trees (predominantly oaks) and set back from the roads by wide grass verges and drainage channels. There are surviving areas of ridge and furrow pasture, overlain by enclosure field boundaries.
- 3.12. There is a sense of elevation on higher ground, with views from the edges of the hills (e.g. Church End). Ecological interest includes woodland, grassland and marshland habitats. The overall strategy of the LCA 2015 is that: *“Landscape enhancement would result from conserving, restoring and improving positive features to strengthen landscape pattern and visual integrity. This landscape has retained a distinctive land cover pattern (for example the hedgerow network) and has a number of features that combine to form a distinctive sense of place”*.



## Green Infrastructure (GI)

- 3.13. Green Infrastructure (GI) is a descriptive term which describes the network of open spaces, countryside, footpaths, the heritage landscape, rivers/streams etc. A good GI network can significantly improve people's quality of life and health as well as providing habitats for plants and wildlife. All new development is required to make contributions to the GI network. The Luton & South Bedfordshire GI Plan (2009), the nearby Stanbridge & Tilsforth GI Plan, Greensand Ridge Local Development Strategy (2008-2013) and the CBC Design Guide (2014) provide information and policies on open spaces, natural environment and landscape locally.
- 3.14. Hockliffe is surrounded by open countryside, mostly agricultural fields with little access for walkers. The countryside footpath network is relatively poor, except in the vicinity of the Church. There are no bridleways within the Parish. Clipstone Brook runs through the village in the vicinity of the crossroads.
- 3.15. The Luton & South Bedfordshire GI Plan considers that improvements to green infrastructure could be made along the Clipstone Brook and that the intrusive nature of transport corridors could be improved with hedgerow planting.

## Community spirit

- 3.16. Hockliffe is a small, friendly village with a strong community. Examples of the existing community spirit are:
- Volunteers help with maintenance around the village.
  - Community events run by a variety of village organisations, such as the annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, the school Summer Fete, and the church Flower Festival are well-supported by residents;
  - Hockliffe Village Facebook – our page is well used as a communication tool, with the villagers sharing their thoughts and ideas about all things Hockliffe;
  - Hockliffe Helping Hands - volunteers from the village support those in need, helping with transport to doctors and hospital appointments, shopping, tasks around the home or running errands;
  - Youth Club – a popular Youth Club for our local children from age 7-12 run by volunteers (including some young adults) from the village;
  - Evergreens – a self-help group for over-60s, which meets fortnightly, reducing isolation and loneliness, by providing activities, outings and information for the elderly;



## Education

3.17. Nursery and preschool education is available in the parish. Hockliffe Lower School provides schooling for up to 75 4-9 year olds. The roll in September 2018 was 56, of whom about 85% live within the parish. With 3 times per year intake, the roll will rise to about 66 in the summer 2019. The majority of children travel to Leighton Buzzard for Middle and Upper schools. Central Bedfordshire is planning to move to a 2-tier system.



Hockliffe Lower School may well become a full primary, catering for 4-11 year olds. This plan makes provision for that expansion, if required, for any reason.

## Recreation facilities

3.18. At the southern end of the village, the Parish Council owns a Recreation Ground, with a children's play park, MUGA, adult fitness equipment and football pitch.

3.19. There is no community building at present. A new purpose-built well-designed village hall would promote social cohesion and allow a much wider range of activity which will in turn reduce social isolation for many groups, provide opportunities for education and classes, indoor physical activity, lunch clubs and a social club.

## Local business, services and employment

3.20. Hockliffe has a dining pub, a shop/post office, a fast food restaurant and a small roadside hotel with diner. There is a variety of businesses located in the village, including Hockliffe Business Park which offers around 15 units for professions, service and light industrial uses. This local employment is an important element in the sustainability of the community, providing additional local services and offering local jobs as an alternative to commuting.

## Population & Household Data

3.21. In 2016, the Parish Council commissioned Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity [BRCC] to carry out a housing needs survey. This analysis of this survey collated information from a wide range of sources, including local questionnaires, 2011 Census, OCSI 2011, ACRE and many more. It came to the following conclusions:

- In 2011 in the parish of Hockliffe there were 350 households containing 823 residents. Compared to 2001, this represents an increase of around 14% in terms of households (from 307) and an increase of 12% in terms of residents (from 730).

- There has been a clear ageing on average of the Hockliffe population over 10 years between 2001 and 2011 (the proportion of those aged 45+ has risen from just over 35% to just over 42% which is about the same as Central Bedfordshire as a whole).
- There are higher levels of single person and couple with no children households than Central Bedfordshire as a whole.
- There are considerably more terraced houses, with correspondingly fewer semi-detached and detached houses in Hockliffe when compared to Central Bedfordshire as a whole.

## 4. Consultation

- 4.1. The decision to start a Neighbourhood Planning process was the culmination of several strands of activity being carried out by different groups on behalf of the community, all involving a great deal of public discussion in various forums. To reach this point, consultation has taken place on numerous occasions, including public meetings and 5 village surveys (Parish Plan 2004, Village Hall 2009, Parish Plan 2013, Housing Needs Survey 2016 and Regulation 14 questionnaire 2017).
- 4.2. Each of these surveys has involved a questionnaire being delivered to every household and business. In addition, there has been much open discussion, including and presentations at Parish Council meetings and through the Village Facebook Group. The Neighbourhood Plan is regularly featured in the Hockliffe Herald, a quarterly Parish Magazine.
- 4.3. In the autumn of 2017, a draft Neighbourhood Plan was subjected to a Regulation 14 consultation process. This involved
  - questionnaires being delivered to every household and business;
  - 4 public events with displays of the plans, and opportunities to meet members of the steering committee and discuss the plans, concerns about the effects of development, the likelihood that development would come, bypasses and so on;
  - consultation with the list of statutory consultees as supplied by CBC, including the water board, highways authorities, County archaeology department, and so on.
- 4.4. An informal survey of potential uses for a new Village Hall was carried out by a Parish Councillor on the Village Facebook page (Appendix D, Annexe 14).
- 4.5. December 2018: Two open sessions to hear final comments on site suggestions before publishing re-drafted Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.6. Full details of the Consultation Process can be found at Appendix D with its Annexes.

## 5. The Parish Priorities, Vision and Objectives

- 5.1. Successive consultations and opportunities for discussion have informed the Steering Group about what really matters in this community. The most formal of these was the Parish Plan of 2013; and the most recent, the Regulation 14 Consultation for this Neighbourhood Plan process in Autumn 2017. In the intervening years, regular discussion on social media, at Parish Council meetings, and in the village magazine Hockliffe Herald has ensured that the committee is sure that the following remain top of the community's priorities and objectives.

### Priorities for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.2. Residents' top priorities have been identified as:
- influencing the design and location of the housing, ensuring a good mix of all sizes to suit all age brackets and family groupings;
  - ensuring that the development brings with it the benefit of improved community facilities, including a purpose-built Village Hall, if possible, which in its turn will provide a venue for leisure, learning, and socialising, the activities which sustain viable communities;
  - reducing the speed, volume and weight of traffic on the A5 and A4012;
  - assisting the Lower School to manage any necessary expansion to continue to provide local education for our younger children within walking distance of their homes and friendship groups;
  - providing attractive, safe, open spaces allowing the community to breathe.

### Vision & Objectives

- 5.3. The Vision and Objectives of this Neighbourhood Plan have been carefully developed and refined by the Parish Council to reflect the priorities of the community and help set the future of the village. The Vision is the overall aim of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Objectives are more detailed, allowing the development of policies which in turn will be used to comment on and determine planning applications.

#### **Vision**

**In 15 years, Hockliffe will be a vibrant, thriving community with sufficient housing in all categories and access to employment and leisure facilities thereby creating a safe and sustainable neighbourhood. The adverse impact of traffic on the A5 and A4012 on the lives and general well-being of residents will be considerably reduced.**

## Objectives

- 1. To identify and fulfil local housing needs, particularly adjusting the housing mix to provide more homes for younger families, and homes suitable for older residents wishing to downsize.**
- 2. Sustain existing employment opportunities in the parish and encourage additional rurally-relevant opportunities and home-based working / businesses.**
- 3. Through the provision of a Village Hall, to sustain and enhance the range of community activities and interests.**
- 4. To preserve and enhance provision at the local school, ensuring that education for all young children is available within the village.**
- 5. To do everything within our powers to reduce the speed, volume and air quality impact of traffic on the A5 and A4012.**
- 6. To include improved footpaths and cycleways in the plan so that residents can move around the village with little need to walk beside the A5.**
- 7. To improve the local environment, while safeguarding the character and integrity of historic buildings and settlements.**

## 6. Sustainable Development

### Introduction

- 6.1. Reflecting the NPPF and the consideration of locations for new housing development (including Green Belt changes) by Central Bedfordshire through the emerging Local Plan, there are three over-arching Development Principles to ensure that new development is sustainable, achieves high design and environmental standards, reflects local preferences in terms of location and especially important, delivers new community infrastructure.
- 6.2. The Parish has a distinctive character and new development should protect, reflect and enhance that character. It should contribute to the quality of life for residents, including healthy lifestyles, access to local services, green open spaces, safe places for active play, and should be accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.
- 6.3. There is a strong feeling that any development should meet the needs of local people - existing and future generations - applying the principles of sustainable development to reflect environmental, economic and social needs. However, in many ways the social

implications of accepting more development underlie the key issues and need, namely for an investment in new community infrastructure, including a Village Hall. The policies reflect the issues facing the Parish, the Vision and the Objectives.

6.4. For Hockliffe, the meaning of sustainable development is set out below.

### ***Sustainable Development Principles***

*Sustainable development for Hockliffe means that development should be:*

- *at an appropriate scale and in locations where it would support the community;*
- *of a high standard of design, reflecting the character of the surroundings;*
- *contributing towards community infrastructure, in particular a Village Hall;*
- *providing superfast broadband (fibre-optic) connections;*
- *ensuring that there is no increase in the risk of flooding;*
- *meeting contemporary construction, energy efficiency and water management standards;*
- *located and designed to enable safe walking and cycling to local services and facilities, preferably within a 500m radius of those locations.*

*The following adverse impacts must be avoided where reasonably possible:*

- *the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land;*
- *the loss or inappropriate diversion of public rights of way;*
- *avoidable intrusion into open countryside;*
- *the loss of or damage to wildlife habitats and hedgerows and trees;*
- *loss of amenity for existing residential properties and reduced efficiency for nearby businesses;*
- *overload on existing utilities and services (water, drainage, sewage and waste).*

## 7. Housing Policies

### New housing

- 7.1. Hockliffe has grown by an additional 133 dwellings since 2001. The growth of Hockliffe has been restricted by the tight Green Belt boundary which has only allowed redevelopment of sites within the settlement.
- 7.2. The emerging Local Plan will need to provide 20,000 new homes up to 2035 and has identified certain areas as being more suitable for growth than others within Central Bedfordshire. Hockliffe lies within 'South Area', suitable for growth given its proximity to the services and employment in Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Leighton Buzzard. Hockliffe is identified as a Large Village (previously classified as a "Category 3 village") and as such must accept some development. As the need for housing has grown, and since this part of Bedfordshire is washed over by the Green Belt, a Green Belt review is contained in the emerging Local Plan to enable the release of some additional land for development.
- 7.3. It is accepted that the main allocation of sites for housing will be undertaken through the emerging Local Plan, but the intention of the Neighbourhood Plan is to maintain a self-contained community, with clear physical boundaries, complementing the character of the village. Accordingly, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been liaising with Central Bedfordshire Council and relevant landowners and developers to reach the optimum solution as set out below which is in accordance with Paragraph 136 of the NPPF which allows minor changes to Green Belt boundaries through the Neighbourhood Plan process.
- 7.4. The previous iteration of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan (Consultation Draft September 2017) proposed 4 sites with a total of 170 houses. The intention at that time was to generate sufficient funding, plus a suitable site, to provide the desperately needed new Village Hall. Events have overtaken those proposals. Two of the sites supported by the earlier Neighbourhood Plan have been deemed unacceptable for housing development through the Local Plan site selection process for various reasons, including constraints imposed by archaeology and flooding.
- 7.5. The emerging Local Plan, through its rigorous site selection process, has allocated 3 different sites in the Submission Version which is being considered by a Planning Inspector. (See Local Plan Sites Map at Appendix A).

### Site off Woburn Road

- 7.6. A newly proposed site emerged recently as part of the Local Plan process. The site is known as 'HAS26, A5 Watling Street' and the Local Plan allocates it for 41 dwellings. It is currently agricultural land that lies behind houses fronting onto the A5 North and at the rear of the school. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering group is in favour of that site, and following negotiations with the landowners' representatives, consider that a further area adjacent to Woburn Road would allow for a better outcome for the community, meeting several of the objectives described above: i.e. providing an appropriate site for the Village Hall, plus an extension to the school grounds and potential for a shared car park for both

facilities. In addition, a roundabout could be constructed to give access to the site from Woburn Road which would also have the additional benefit of forcing traffic to slow down in the vicinity of the school. As this site lies within the Green Belt, amendments may need to be made to the Green Belt Boundary accordingly.

### Site off Leighton Road

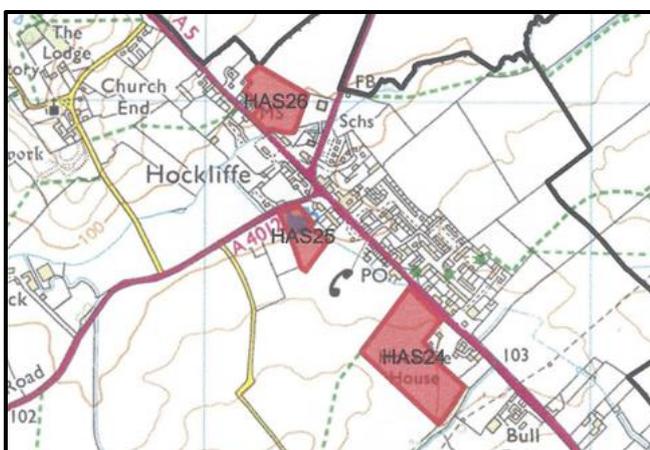
7.7. A small piece of agricultural land adjacent to the White Hart’s carpark has been allocated in the Draft Local Plan for 23 dwellings (HAS25, Land at Leighton Road). Whilst this site in itself is a logical extension to the settlement, a larger allocation of 68 dwellings here in total including part of NLP 298 (the “Hillersdon Land”) would allow for more flexibility of dwelling type and size, a larger number of houses overall and therefore more affordable housing and give an opportunity for some additional green amenity space. A new Green Belt boundary at Little Lane would be defensible and the site would be of sufficient size to provide much needed green space, which could preserve the ridge and furrow on this piece of land. This site is owned by the Hillersdon Trust. Proceeds from its development would create a significant trust fund for the benefit of the community.

### Land to SW of A5

7.8. This site comprises an L-shaped piece of agricultural land at the southern end of the village, accessed off the A5, allocated in the Draft Local Plan for 77 dwellings. This site was assessed as a whole large field with land to the north and west during the emerging Local Plan site assessment process. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group consider that a smaller portion of this along the A5 for 32 dwellings would relate better to the village pattern of development, therefore resulting in a more appropriate allocation. It would also reduce the impact of traffic accessing the A5.

CBC Local Plan proposed sites  
See Appendix A for larger version

Hockliffe NP proposed sites  
See Appendix B for larger version



### **Policy H1: Locations for Future New Housing Development**

To secure managed and sustainable growth in Hockliffe, new housing development will be supported through Local Plan allocations in the following locations:

1. The site proposed in the Local Plan for 41 dwellings at the north end of the village (known as HAS26 'A5 Watling Street' and shown as Site A on the Policies Map (Appendix B)) shall be accessed from the Woburn Road via Site X on the Policies Map which will also provide sufficient land to the North of the school for a school extension, a new Village Hall and car park.
2. The site proposed in the Local Plan (known as HAS25 'Land at Leighton Road') shall be enlarged to the west to provide 68 dwellings (23 on HAS25 and 45 on the extended portion) with green space to preserve some existing ridge and furrow. These sites are shown as Site B1 and Site B2 on the Policies Map.
3. Part of the site in the Draft Local Plan (known as HAS24 'Land to South West of A5') shall be developed to provide 32 dwellings. This is shown as Site C on the Policies Map.

The total number of new dwellings should not exceed 141 dwellings.

Each allocation will:

- include affordable housing and a mix of house sizes;
- contribute to recreational and community facilities, in particular the provision of a new Village Hall;
- provide on-site green infrastructure including informal open spaces to enhance the character of the village and substantial planting at the perimeters to provide a definitive 'edge' to the settlement;
- provide pedestrian and cycle links from and through the new development to improve access for residents to local facilities;
- retain, as far as possible, archaeological features.

## **Development within the Settlement Envelope**

- 7.9. Hockliffe is a village where the built development is defined by a Settlement Envelope in the Local Plan. Outside the Settlement Envelope, the land is designated Green Belt, where there are stringent restrictions on new development. However, within the Settlement Envelope some new development including housing, commercial and community facilities will be acceptable in principle. For example, small, well-designed residential schemes can be supported where they do not have a detrimental effect on the area and neighbouring properties. However, some schemes could potentially adversely affect the character of the village and will be resisted.
- 7.10. Redevelopment of existing underused or commercial sites may be acceptable, depending upon the proposed use and design of the new scheme.

## **Policy H2: Development within the Settlement Envelope**

Appropriate new development, including housing, will be supported on infill or redevelopment sites inside the settlement envelope where there is no adverse impact on existing retail, employment and community uses.

All development proposed should meet the following criteria:

- There is no significant adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy; overshadowing; overbearing by a building or structure; car parking; removal of mature vegetation or landscaping and additional traffic resulting from the development.
- Development must respect the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings and their settings, the Scheduled Ancient Monument and the historic landscape.
- Provision is made of natural landscaping, including native trees, hedgerows, wetland areas and the retention or incorporation of habitats for small mammals, birds and insects.
- A contribution is made towards the cost of providing improved community infrastructure, especially a new Village Hall.

## **Housing Affordability and Mix**

- 7.11. The emerging Local Plan requires a balanced housing market and an integrated mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures. It is noted that in the Local Plan, a flexible approach on thresholds, proportions, tenure, size and type will be taken on a scheme by scheme basis to reflect housing needs in the locality and to ensure scheme viability, subject to an open book approach by developers. This will help to maintain housing choice and increase the availability of housing for young families.
- 7.12. In August 2018, there was 1 flat for private rent and 13 residential properties for sale in Hockliffe (*Data from Rightmove*). This is just over 3% of private housing stock. None was shared ownership or retirement property. Most of the sales in Hockliffe over the past year were terraced properties which on average sold for £312,500. Semi-detached properties had an average sold price of £232,500 and detached properties averaged at £330,000. Hockliffe, with an overall average price of £289,250, was more expensive than nearby Dunstable (£274,451), but was cheaper than Heath & Reach (£366,310) and Stanbridge (£478,214). In the past year, house prices in Hockliffe were similar to the year before and 15% up on 2012 when they averaged £250,835. Only 12 properties were sold in the last year. Therefore, the average prices may only reflect the mix of properties sold, rather than changes in the local market itself.

### **Affordable Housing needs**

- 7.13. The Housing Needs Survey identified a need for affordable housing from households resident in (or with strong links to) the parish, which is unlikely to be met by normal market provision. This need generally comes from families with dependent children who either want to get on the housing ladder or need to find a larger but more affordable

- property, and from older individuals or couples looking for properties more suitable for retirement. A particular need for affordable rental properties was shown.
- 7.14. Based on data supplied by respondents, up to 13 households with a local connection would be suitable for housing within a rural exception site development, whether for rent or shared ownership. In order to have reasonable confidence that new housing includes some dwellings to meet local needs and would be taken up by people with a local connection to Hockliffe, the recommendation is to meet just over 50% of the need identified over the next 5 years, which would be 7 units.
- 7.15. Providing an 'exceptions scheme' would be reliant on bringing forward a site which is not considered normally suitable for development such as one outside the settlement envelope in the Green Belt. Such a scheme would be considered exceptional development in the Green Belt as set out in paragraph 145 of the NPPF.

### Housing Mix

- 7.16. Analysis of the responses in the Housing Needs Survey suggests that there is a need for 2 and 3 bed houses and bungalows or retirement properties (e.g. houses built to Lifetime Homes criteria) if Hockliffe is to meet the identified current and future needs of existing owner-occupiers wishing to stay in the parish. This reflects the requirement for smaller units to reflect the rise in the average age of the Hockliffe population over 10 years between 2001 and 2011 (the proportion of those aged 45+ has risen from just over 35% to 42%). There is a shortage of 2-bedroom properties for sale on the open market (none available at the time of the study), as well as an apparent shortage of properties targeted at older people.
- 7.17. If suitable smaller properties were more widely available, this could address under-occupation, freeing up larger houses for growing families as they work their way up the housing ladder.
- 7.18. The Housing Needs Survey suggests that families which settled in the larger 1980 houses of White Horse Close are comfortable and settled and unlikely to move on. There is little suitable for the now aging empty nesters to move into locally, and so they stay. This is causing a log jam, with the result that many young families growing up in the newest houses have to move away from the village when they need more space. There is therefore also a need for a proportion of larger family housing to maintain a balanced population (without an over-reliance on commuting) which in turn will help to support the village school, convenience store and local facilities.

#### **Policy H3: Housing mix and affordability**

In new residential developments, there should be a varied mix of house types and sizes which should include a proportion of smaller dwellings, lower cost market homes and larger family homes, with a range of tenures.

The provision of affordable homes will be required in line with the Local Plan requirement.

A new development for 7 affordable homes as an 'exception scheme' will be supported to provide people with links to the Parish an opportunity to live affordably in Hockliffe.

## 8. Community Facilities

### Provision of a Village Hall

- 8.1. The provision of a Village Hall and other community facilities will help to promote community cohesion. This requirement reflects a key element of the NPPF (para 28) and the priority in the Central Bedfordshire Strategic Plan (Five Year Plan 2015-2020), to support a prosperous rural economy, providing infrastructure to support development. Central Bedfordshire Council's Village Hall & Community Buildings Survey 2017 acknowledges that Hockliffe requires a Village Hall. ([http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/halls-community-buildings-report-2017\\_tcm3-30045.pdf](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/halls-community-buildings-report-2017_tcm3-30045.pdf))
- 8.2. The aim is to create a community hub where everyone, young and old, will be able to meet and feel welcome. It would be at the heart of village life, providing a venue for social activities, classes and services. Regular usage and events, where the community can come together, will reduce local isolation and increase health and wellbeing. A healthy community is a good place to grow up and grow old in. It is one which supports healthy lifestyles and reductions in health inequalities to enhance the physical and mental wellbeing of the residents of Hockliffe. It would meet the needs of children and young people to grow and develop, as well as being adaptable to the needs of an increasingly elderly population and those with dementia and other sensory or mobility impairments. It seems that a new Village Hall will be welcomed, and well-used (see Appendix D, Annexe 14).
- 8.3. It is considered that the best site for a Village Hall would be adjacent to the School on Woburn Road, because:
  - it is accessible on foot for most of the village without having to walk along the A5;
  - proximity to the school would allow some overspill parking for school drop-off and pick-up times, which would improve safety outside the school on the Woburn Road;
  - a further community facility in this area would strengthen the argument for improved traffic management on the Woburn Road, e.g. reduced speed limit or other traffic calming measures;
  - it would release the Kilby Road recreation ground for sports provision and allotments.
- 8.4. Other projects, such as allotments, if a need is established, will be provided on the Recreation Ground.
- 8.5. The mechanisms for securing planning gain/development related funding will include: Unilateral Undertakings by developers, Section 106 Agreements, Planning Conditions and the Community Infrastructure Levy, when it is introduced. Alongside this requirement, the Parish Council will work with the Central Bedfordshire Council to secure other external funding, especially for the Village Hall.

#### **Policy CF1: Providing a Village Hall**

A new Village Hall and car park will be provided on Site X adjacent to Hockliffe Lower School as shown on the Policies Map (Appendix B).

All new developments in the Parish will be expected to make financial contributions towards this provision through s106 agreements, unilateral undertakings and CIL.

## Recreation and Open Space

- 8.6. Recreation land in Hockliffe is limited and it is important that it is protected in line with the NPPF and in recognition of the local pressure on open space. These spaces contribute to the quality of life for local residents and to the physical character of the village.
- 8.7. Although the main focus of community provision linked to new housing development is investment in community infrastructure, especially the new Village Hall, it is desirable that green spaces be included in new developments, provided that measures are included to ensure they are maintained, helping to bring the countryside into the built environment wherever possible, but Rural character, for most people, is defined not only by surrounding countryside but also by the introduction of green spaces and trees within the built environment. In addition to providing for formal and informal recreation, all new housing developments should incorporate imaginative green spaces, with a focus on native tree planting to improve the habitat. Attention should also be paid to the potential to use new linear open spaces to improve pedestrian and cycling routes to the school and the proposed Village Hall.
- 8.8. The Parish Council will strive to ensure that open space is provided as part of new development. In addition, it will pursue opportunities provided by development related funding and encourage other funding bids to enhance local open space and recreation facilities as and when opportunities emerge.



### **Policy CF2: Existing Open Spaces**

Existing open spaces and recreation facilities, including Kilby Road Recreation Ground and the Lower School playing field, will be protected from development. Proposals which would reduce the quality or quantity of these facilities will only be permitted where the existing facilities are re-provided to a better quality or quantity in an appropriate location.

### **Policy CF3: Open space provision as part of new development**

Open space should be provided within new development to accord with the standards set by Central Bedfordshire in the Local Plan and the following criteria should be met:

- Efforts should be made to develop green corridors between the village and the countryside;
- Developments should incorporate tree and shrub planting.

Suitable arrangements must be incorporated for the costs of future maintenance of these spaces.

## Local Green Spaces

8.9. Consultation shows that people place a high value on the relationship between the village, the countryside and on the open spaces that help to define the landscape and character of the area. Designation of Local Green Spaces (LGS) give a very high level of protection to such open spaces. In the NPPF it is stated that in Neighbourhood Plans, local communities can identify green areas of particular importance to them for special protection and to rule out new development, other than in “very special circumstances”. The proposed designations are in accordance with the requirement in Paragraph 100 of the NPPF:

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

8.10. Both proposed Local Green Spaces are in close proximity to the village and are used and valued by local residents and are not extensive tracts of land. The designation does not result in such spaces necessarily being more publicly accessible, nor does it imply that they are under threat from development.



8.11. Hockliffe Green is a small but important triangular piece of open space at the heart of the Conservation Area. With its mature trees and bench, it is much valued by local people.

8.12. Church Farm, a mediaeval moated site, settlement and cultivation earthwork at Church Farm, is a well-recognised and valued part of local heritage. Scheduled Monuments are covered by the terms of the 1979 Ancient Monument and Archaeological Areas Act and therefore certain activities require Scheduled Monument Consent from the Secretary of State for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. Development of this site will not be possible; the Local Green Space designated recognises its importance to the community.

### **Policy CF4: Local Green Spaces**

The following areas shown on the Policies Map are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- Hockliffe Green (Church End).
- Mediaeval moated site, associated settlement and cultivation earthworks at Church Farm.

Development will be resisted in the Local Green Spaces to protect their special character and contribution to the Parish.

## 9. Design of new development

### High Quality Design

- 9.1. The NPPF and the Neighbourhood Plan recognise that well-designed buildings and places improve the quality of life and that it is a core planning principle to secure good design. The Neighbourhood Plan wishes to reflect community opinion and aspirations and add a local dimension to the assessment of proposals for new housing by utilising the relevant principles from Building for Life 12 and other design standards. Good design is not just about appearance, but also functionality and the relationship to surroundings. It is not about copying past styles, or preventing innovative modern design. The aim is to create site-specific creative design, which is contextual by referencing form and materials to surroundings. Development proposals should include a Design and Access Statement, or other written statement related to the scale and complexity of the scheme, which shows that the development has been designed to specifically relate to its setting. This is essential to ensure that the special character of the village is protected and its local distinctiveness is enhanced and reinforced.
- 9.2. In addition to the above criteria, detailed design should include consideration of security, especially for sight-lines, avoiding hidden corners and boundary treatments.

#### **Policy D1: The Design of New Development**

Proposals for good quality new development (including new buildings and extensions to existing buildings) will be supported, where they address the following criteria.

All new development will:

- relate to the existing development pattern in terms of enclosure and definition of streets/spaces;
- be well integrated with surroundings, reinforcing connections, taking opportunities of new ones;
- provide convenient access to community services and facilities;
- have good access to public transport or otherwise help reduce car dependency;
- create a place with a locally inspired or distinctive character;
- take advantage of the local topography, landscape and water features, trees and plants, wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimate;
- provide buildings, landscaping and planting to create well defined streets and spaces;
- take advantage of views into/from the site to enable easy access and navigation through;
- integrate car parking within landscaping so that it does not dominate the street;
- provide convenient, well-screened storage for bins and recycling, bicycles and motor vehicles;
- be of an appropriate scale and density in relation to its setting;
- use materials appropriate to the development's context.

## Parking

- 9.3. It is important that the design of new housing development is not dominated by car parking but a failure to make proper provision can result in problems in terms of appearance and safety. In terms of design, the provision of off-street car parking in sight of properties is a primary concern. Some newer housing estates offer off-street parking in the form of communal areas. There is a feeling that this is disliked where residents cannot physically see their cars, and that this encourages parking on the street, adding to congestion and narrowing the usable highway.
- 9.4. Car ownership levels in the parish are high (in the 2011 Census 50% of households had 2 or more vehicles compared to 46.7% in Central Bedfordshire and 32% in England), reflecting both the rural location and limited availability of public transport. Off-road parking is limited in the village and is a frequent source of frustration for residents, even on new estates. Adherence to Central Bedfordshire Council's parking standards reflect these local factors and seek to ensure that new development does not add to current levels of congestion.
- 9.5. In all parish surveys residents expressed strong concerns about traffic and transport issues and the impact on their well-being. They highlighted the dangers caused by on-street parking and risks to pedestrian and cyclist safety. The loss of any of the limited parking in the village could exacerbate these problems. This and other transport policies are intended to manage the impact of traffic arising from new development to improve the well-being of local residents.

### **Policy D2: Car Parking**

Proposals for new housing developments will provide parking in line with Central Bedfordshire's parking standards and have adequate on-site parking to meet current and future needs, unless alternative and accessible car parking arrangements can be made which do not add to on-street congestion.

New development should not result in the loss of publicly accessible off-street car parking. Developments which propose to remove off-road public parking spaces will only be supported where alternative provision is made which increases or maintains the number of accessible parking spaces available on or within the immediate vicinity of the site. Proposals for new development that provide additional off-road car parking spaces, to alleviate parking congestion, will be encouraged.

## 10. Traffic and transport



### Within Hockliffe Village

10.1. The A5 trunk road runs through the centre of the village, and is heavily trafficked with a 40mph speed limit throughout. The A4012 provides a north-east to west link to places such as Woburn, M1 Junction 13, and Leighton Buzzard. The A4012 towards the Lower School, whilst having a lower speed limit, has a narrow footway with no formal crossing points. Whilst the A5 does provide footways of a generally adequate width, and a number of crossing points, the amount and speed of traffic make for an intimidating environment for pedestrians. The junction with the A4012 is poorly designed for pedestrians, with entrance and exits onto the junction not having pelican crossings.

- 10.2. It is acknowledged in the Local Transport Plan that the A5 dominates the village and the junction (crossroads) with the A4012, whilst it enables the management of traffic flows and safer crossing for pedestrians, creates queues of traffic. HGVs, in particular, have an adverse impact on the environment of the village.
- 10.3. In all parish surveys residents expressed strong concerns about traffic issues and the impact on their well-being. They highlight problems with the speed, volume and nature of traffic, the impact of heavy traffic through the parish's narrow rural lanes and the risks to pedestrian and cyclist safety.
- 10.4. Transport is the responsibility of Central Bedfordshire and Highways England and policies are mainly provided in the Local Plan and the Local Transport Plan. This locally-based policy is complementary, so that the impact of traffic generated by development at pressure points is systematically assessed. Measures can then be taken to reduce hazards, improve pedestrian connectivity, safety and avoid adding to problems.
- 10.5. All developments which will increase traffic should be accompanied by a Transport Statement or Assessment and should include the following matters:
- Road Safety and Parking, including the avoidance of congestion;
  - A local focus on providing pedestrian and cycle links between new housing and the Village Hall, school, shop and recreation ground;
  - If practicable, the relief of existing congestion at Hockliffe Lower School;
  - Developers should identify the realistic level of traffic their development will generate;
  - Development should not add to existing traffic congestion, but should strive to reduce it.
- 10.6. As part of the underlying approach to achieving sustainable development in the Neighbourhood Plan any development should encourage walking, cycling, and the use of public transport. As shown on the Connectivity and Key Views maps (Appendix C), there are several fixed (safe) crossing points on the A5 and a well-developed network of paved walkways. It is important that new development complements and where possible improves provision, with a focus on providing safe access to the school and Village Hall.

### **Policy TT1: The traffic impact of new development**

Proposed developments that would generate a significant amount of movement or would potentially affect a known traffic hazard should be supported by realistic measures to maintain highway safety and avoid vehicular/pedestrian conflict. Where appropriate it may be necessary to consider off-site measures where these are required to accommodate the traffic impact of the scheme.

Where they are proposed, new roads, junctions, footpaths and traffic management measures should be designed to complement the rural character of the village and reflect local heritage.

## **Traffic impact in the wider area**

- 10.7. It is acknowledged that transport is the responsibility of the Highway Authority, Central Bedfordshire Council and Highways England, and that the policy context is provided mainly in the Local Plan and the Local Transport Plan.
- 10.8. However, traffic flows in and around Hockliffe are influenced by the presence of large scale commercial and logistics parks nearby and by the increased scale of housebuilding in and around Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard; and the recent addition of the new Junction 11a on the M1 just south of the village. The externally focused elements of this policy highlight the need for a partnership approach. The intention is that Hockliffe will benefit from agreed measures so that the adverse impacts of the nearby residential and commercial development on the A5 are minimised. The implementation of the policy will require partnerships on investment using Section 106 Agreements, Community Infrastructure Levy and, subject to funding priorities, Local Transport Plan funding.
- 10.9. Local and strategic traffic management which reduces HGV/LGV vehicles through the parish will be supported, in order to minimise their adverse impact, whilst managing new developments so that they do not have an unacceptable impact on local residents.

### **Policy TT2: The A5 Corridor: Development related traffic requirements**

Hockliffe Parish Council will work with Central Bedfordshire Council and Highways England to ensure that the traffic issues in Hockliffe, especially related to the A5 Trunk Road, are considered as part of development proposals outside the Parish.

As a matter of principle, development should not result in any worsening of the current highway safety and traffic problems, and should make every effort to reduce them. Where appropriate, proposals must be supported by a Transport Assessment which sets out details of the transport issues relating to the development, including the measures to be taken to deal with the traffic impacts of the scheme.

## Provision for cyclists and pedestrians

- 10.10. A partnership approach between the Parish Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and developers will be required to improve highway safety and minimise conflicts between road traffic, cyclists and pedestrians. It is intended that support will be given to new ways of managing the traffic throughout the parish by promoting pedestrian and cyclist safety and residents' well-being through lower traffic speeds and traffic volumes.

### **Policy TT3: Transport improvements: better provision for pedestrians & cyclists**

New development, including housing sites, must make provision (through Legal Agreements, planning conditions and funding) to focus on the highways most affected as a result of those developments. Such provision should be used to help fund schemes that reduce traffic speeds and volumes and improve the provision of pavements and access for pedestrians and cyclists.

# 11. Conservation

## Conservation Area

- 11.1. Hockliffe (Church End) Conservation Area is limited to the area around the Church and was designated in 2004.
- 11.2. Attention will be paid to the repair and improvement of properties (Listed, locally significant and unlisted) and to the condition of open spaces, highway land and street furniture. It is recognised that a Neighbourhood Plan cannot propose actions under Conservation Area legislation. However, it is felt that the extent of current information on the Conservation Area is limited. Therefore, the Parish Council will encourage Central Bedfordshire Council and Historic England to prepare a Conservation Area Appraisal and updated Management Plan for Hockliffe Conservation Area.



### **Policy CON1: Hockliffe (Church End) Conservation Area and its setting**

Development in the Conservation Area and its setting should achieve high quality design, set in a clear context in terms of materials, scale, setting and layout. The following criteria apply:

- The spaciousness of the area is retained;
- Development should be of an appropriate scale and mass for the immediate area;
- Use of locally distinctive details (materials, openings/access and boundary treatments) is required;
- The impact of development should not be detrimental on views into and out of the Conservation Area.

Applicants must explain, in a Design and Access Statement and/or Heritage Statement, how the proposal will address these criteria.

## Built Heritage Assets

- 11.3. It is essential that the location and design of new development has regard to the historic character of the local area. This protection is in accordance with the guidance contained in paragraphs 189-193 of the National Planning Policy Framework. There are 31 listed buildings in Hockliffe, 5 clustered around the Church and the majority of the remainder located along Watling Street.

### **Policy CON2: Protecting and enhancing local heritage assets**

All development proposals affecting identified local heritage assets will be required to take into account the character, context and setting of the assets. Development should be designed taking account of local styles, materials and detail. The loss of, or substantial harm, to a local asset, will be resisted taking into account the balance of judgement weighing up the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset.

## **Archaeology**

- 11.4. The NPPF identifies the historic environment as a Core Planning Principle. The extent of Roman and mediaeval archaeology in Hockliffe is a key element of the historic environment and this policy will ensure that development takes account of archaeological considerations. The Scheduled Ancient Monument at Church Farm should be protected and any development which has a significant, adverse effect on it should be resisted.
- 11.5. Ridge and furrow cultivation earthworks are considered to be archaeological monuments and development proposals that would result in the destruction of significant examples are likely to be met with a recommendation for refusal from the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeology Team unless the harm is adequately mitigated.

### **Policy CON3: Protecting and enhancing archaeological sites**

Substantial harm to or loss of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and other archaeological features such as significant examples of ridge and furrow will be resisted. Development proposals should demonstrate that they have considered the potential impact on above and below ground archaeology and identify mitigation strategies to ensure that evidence of past environments is not lost.



## 12. Landscape and Natural Environment

### Landscape

12.1. Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan demonstrates the value that local people place on the landscape and environment of the Parish. The Landscape Character Assessment (2015) for this part of Bedfordshire indicates a high-quality landscape, where characteristic features are well represented and in good condition and there is a wide and long history represented in the landscape. The assessment sets “Guidelines for New Development”. Those relevant to the landscape around Hockliffe are summarised below:

- Conserve individual settlements and safeguard the setting of associated monuments.
- Monitor the development of tall structures such as communication masts in the landscape.
- Conserve the character of the rural roads and limit urbanising influences.
- Prevent ribbon development that could lead to settlements merging and loss of identity.
- Ensure an appropriate rural interface between settlement edges and the rural landscape.
- Conserve the clear views and areas of undeveloped skyline.
- Conserve the subtle valley of the Clipstone Brook and enhance rights of way.

12.2. This supports an approach that requires development to be unobtrusive and not lead to loss of characteristic features.

12.3. It is important that the landscape character of the countryside around the village is protected. Field surveys, mapping and topographic studies have been undertaken to define key views and relate these to specific locations where great care will be needed with the design of new development or where any larger scale built development is unlikely to be acceptable. They provide a basis for the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, including locations for new housing, design criteria, protecting local open spaces, and criteria for considering other development. Views have been identified using desk-based and field surveys, taking account of key public locations in the village, including public footpaths, roads and lanes and gathering places. The resultant key views are listed below and shown on the Connectivity & Key Views Map (Appendix C).

- South-east over Hockliffe village from scarp on A5 north;
- South-east over Hockliffe village from footpath in Church End;
- North-west up to Church End from footpath in Hockliffe village;
- South-east from scarp at Church End over open countryside;
- West from footpath in Clipstone Brook Valley towards Hockliffe village;
- East from footpath in Clipstone Brook Valley towards open countryside;
- West from footpath towards Hockliffe village;
- East from footpath towards open countryside and Tebworth;



- 12.4. Some change that occurs in the landscape is outside planning control, but where planning permission is required for development, landscape features should be considered in a systematic way. Proposals for new development should include an appropriate landscape analysis either as a freestanding report or as part of a design and access statement.

**Policy NE1: Protecting the Landscape**

Any proposals for development in the rural parts of the Parish should recognise and seek to protect and enhance the historic and natural landscape and local character of the Parish, including key views. Field patterns and elements of the landscape heritage of the area, including field ponds, mature trees and historic hedgerows should be protected and incorporated into any landscape design schemes and their long-term maintenance ensured.

## Nature Conservation

- 12.5. Protection of the nature conservation interest in the Parish, which is valued by local people, is critical, with reference to the important habitats and landscape identified in both the Landscape Character Assessment (2015) and the Design Guide.
- 12.6. A wildlife corridor is an area of habitat connecting wildlife populations separated by human activities or structures (such as roads and built development). The most obvious example of such a corridor is the Clipstone Brook. In addition there are “Stepping stones” throughout the Parish - discontinuous patches of habitat and natural features that enable wildlife to disperse and migrate.
- 12.7. All proposals for new development will be required to demonstrate how the design has taken into account its potential impact on local habitats and species. This will include sites and features that are locally important in Hockliffe, including hills and the Clipstone Brook valley, trees, hedges and woodland, parkland ponds & watercourses and unimproved grassland. Developers will be required to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to protect wildlife and take every available opportunity to enhance biodiversity and important habitats. Landscaping schemes will be required to use native species for planting schemes, particularly those found locally. All new development should seek to increase biodiversity, by, for instance, incorporating swift bricks, and bat and owl boxes into new buildings, particularly at the edges of the settlement.
- 12.8. Where Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SUDS) are required to serve new developments, every opportunity to link them into habitats should be taken.



### Policy NE2: Nature Conservation

New development will be required to protect and enhance existing natural features of sites and where possible enhance biodiversity. Provision of appropriate species-related measures will be required, including, for example, swift bricks, bat and owl boxes and the incorporation of native species into landscaping schemes.

Opportunities should also be taken by developers and landowners to link sustainable drainage solutions in new development to complement nature conservation objectives.

## 13. Local Employment & Business

### Local Businesses

13.1. Hockliffe has limited employment opportunities within the parish with almost three-quarters of working people working elsewhere. Local businesses include some long-established firms in the building supplies (garage doors, fireplaces, tiles, lighting), several hospitality and retail businesses and a number of motor sales and maintenance firms.

13.2. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate employment sites, but it supports the viability



of local businesses and their expansion, where this is proportionate and appropriate in the individual circumstances. The intention is to avoid Hockliffe becoming even more of a “dormitory” settlement which is over-dependent on outward commuting. It also encourages appropriate diversification of existing economic activities, as this will make the local economy more robust and more sustainable. Home-working is also seen as a means of encouraging business and creating a sustainable community with less commuting and a more sustainable lifestyle,

saving individuals the cost of travel and increasing their leisure time. Young people can find it difficult to find a first job where they can develop workplace skills, and local businesses provide jobs for school leavers moving into work for the first time.

13.3. The aim is to facilitate economic development within Hockliffe which is appropriate in scale, supports existing local businesses, and where appropriate brings vacant historic buildings back into beneficial use. However, development must be of a scale and intensity appropriate to its context, must not impact detrimentally on residential amenity, and must have an acceptable impact on the character and scale of the village and its rural hinterland. The provision of good telecommunications is particularly important in rural areas and in supporting the viability and sustainability of rural enterprise and home-working.

13.4. A good broadband service is essential for small businesses and people working from home. All new residential and commercial units will be required to provide infrastructure to enable fast broadband.

### **Policy LE1: Supporting Local Employment and Businesses**

The loss of employment sites such as the Hockliffe Business Park to other uses, including housing, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that employment use is no longer viable.

Proposals for the development of new small businesses and for the expansion or diversification of existing businesses, including farm-based operations, will be encouraged, providing that:

- it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impact from increased traffic, noise, smell, lighting, vibration or other emissions or activities arising from the proposed development;
- it would have an acceptable impact on the character and scale of the village, its rural hinterland and landscape;
- where relevant, opportunities are taken to secure the re-use of vacant or redundant historic buildings as part of the development.

Applications for extensions or part change of use of dwellings to enable flexible or home-working within the development boundary will be supported, subject to there being appropriate parking and that the residential amenity of neighbouring properties is maintained.

The provision of effective broadband services will be encouraged and appropriate measures should be incorporated into the design of workplaces.

## **14. Implementation and Monitoring**

- 14.1. This section outlines the approach to the implementation of the Hockliffe Neighbourhood Plan, including: working in partnership, funding mechanisms, priority projects and monitoring/review. The approach will be that new development should be supported by the timely delivery of infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to provide a balanced, self-sufficient community.

### **Working in partnership**

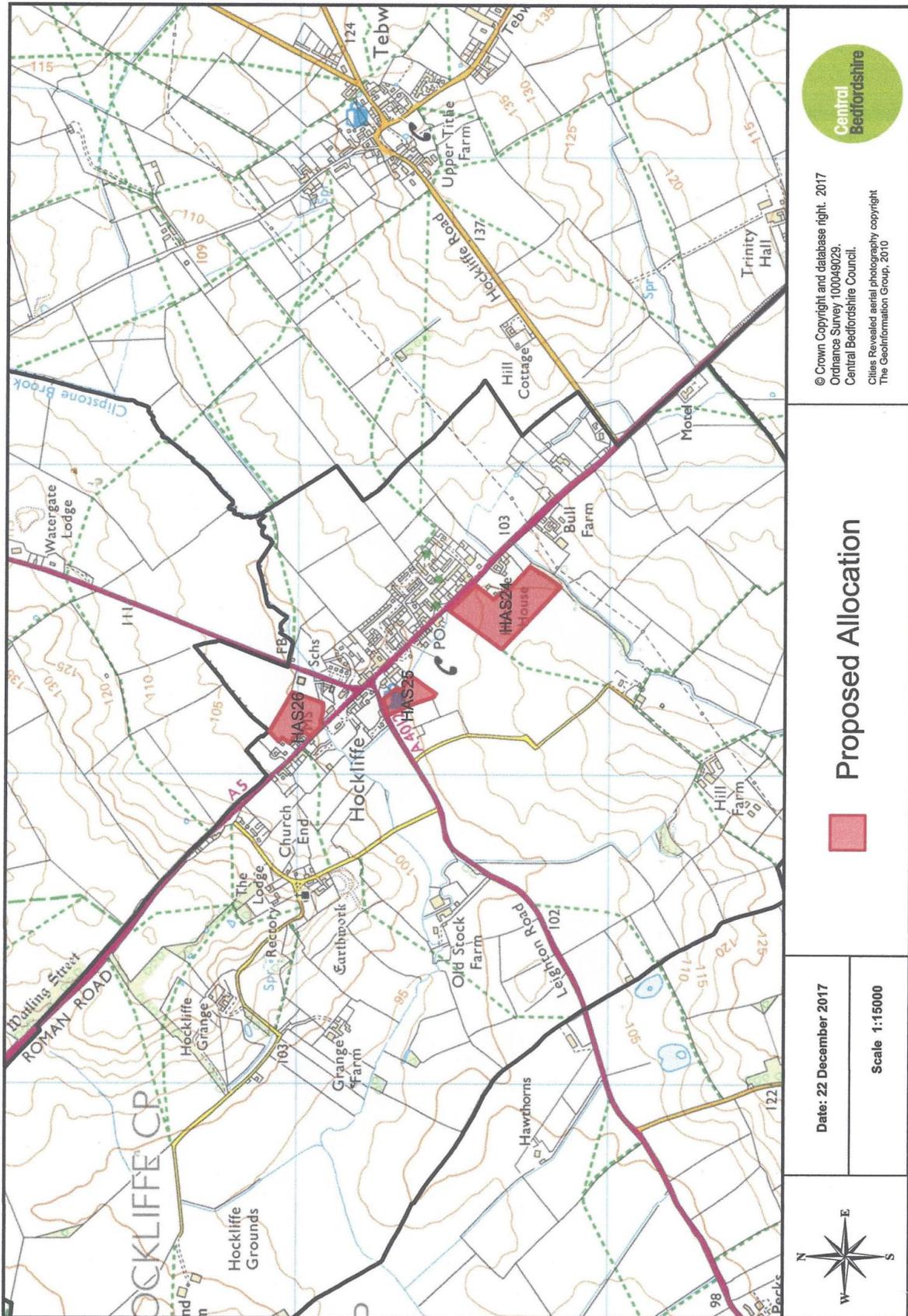
- 14.2. Hockliffe Parish Council is committed to Localism and locally informed influence over planning decisions and it will be the key organisation in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Council will build upon its excellent track record in engaging in planning decisions (reactively through consultation and proactively through promoting the policies of this plan) and by delivering related projects for the local community. However, it is recognised that partnership working is needed for the potential of the plan to be realised. Partnership and joint working will be key elements in the successful implementation of the plan. The main organisations and the roles that they can play are summarised below:

- **Central Bedfordshire Council** - Planning Policy, Development Control, Housing Management and Improvement, Economic Development, Open Spaces, Recreation and Community Facilities and unitary authority functions, including: Drainage, Highways and Transport, Education, Landscape and Social Services.
- **Highways England** – traffic and transport on the A5 trunk road.
- **Adjoining Parish Councils** – assessing impact of large scale planning applications.
- **South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnerships (SEMLEP)** - the LEP is a potential partner for joint working, funding, and implementation and activity that may be relevant to rural businesses.
- **Environment Agency** - the planning, design and delivery of development, taking account of: (1) flood risk management; (2) water quality and water resources, (3) waste management, (4) land contamination & soil and (5) environmental permits and other regulations.
- **Site owners and developers** will need to liaise with the Parish Council as well as the other agencies involved in development.

## Funding and Implementation Mechanisms

- 14.3. Financial contributions will be sought from developers through Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which provides a legal framework to raise funds to provide the infrastructure needed to cope with new developments. Central Bedfordshire is working on CIL at present and when it is introduced in the area, contributions will be sought as appropriate under CIL Regulations and the NPPF.
- 14.4. The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations of the 2011 Localism Act enable areas with a Neighbourhood Plan in place to receive at least 25% of the CIL raised in their area to direct to their own local infrastructure priorities. These contributions will be targeted on the priority need to deliver new community infrastructure, especially a new Village Hall. The Parish Council also will encourage developers to use legally binding Unilateral Undertakings to commit the required level of funding to the provision of the Village Hall.
- 14.5. In addition, the Parish Council will seek to influence annual and other budget decisions by Central Bedfordshire Council on housing, open space and recreation, economic development, community facilities and transport, through the Local Transport Plan.
- 14.6. The Parish Council will also work with the appropriate agencies and organisations to develop funding bids to help to achieve Neighbourhood Plan policies and objectives. This might include: The Lottery; UK Government programmes; land fill tax credits, EU Funds and LEP funding.

# Appendix A: Local Plan Sites Map



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 Ordnance Survey 100049029.  
 Central Bedfordshire Council.  
 Cities Revealed aerial photography copyright  
 The GeoInformation Group, 2010

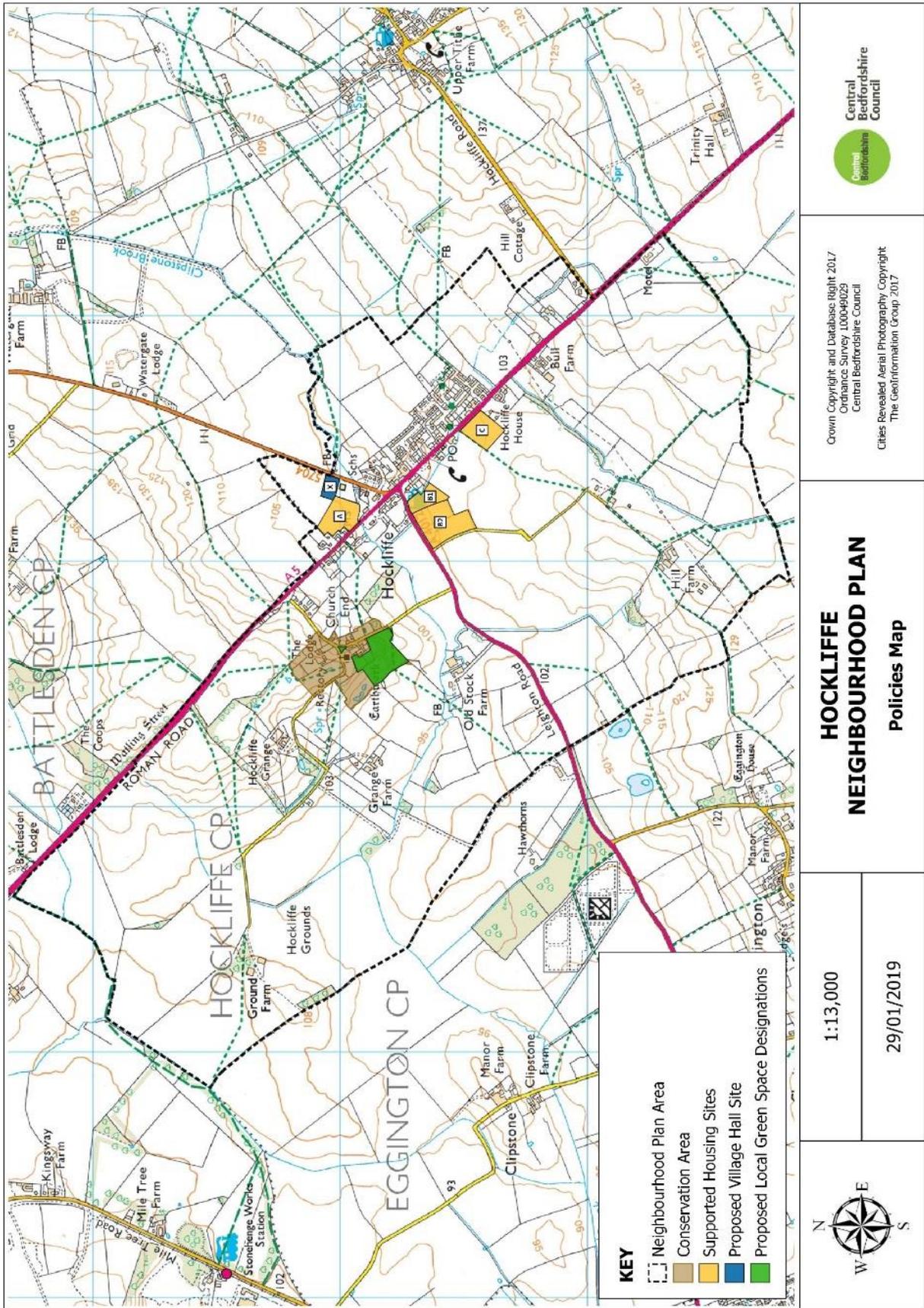
 **Proposed Allocation**

Date: 22 December 2017

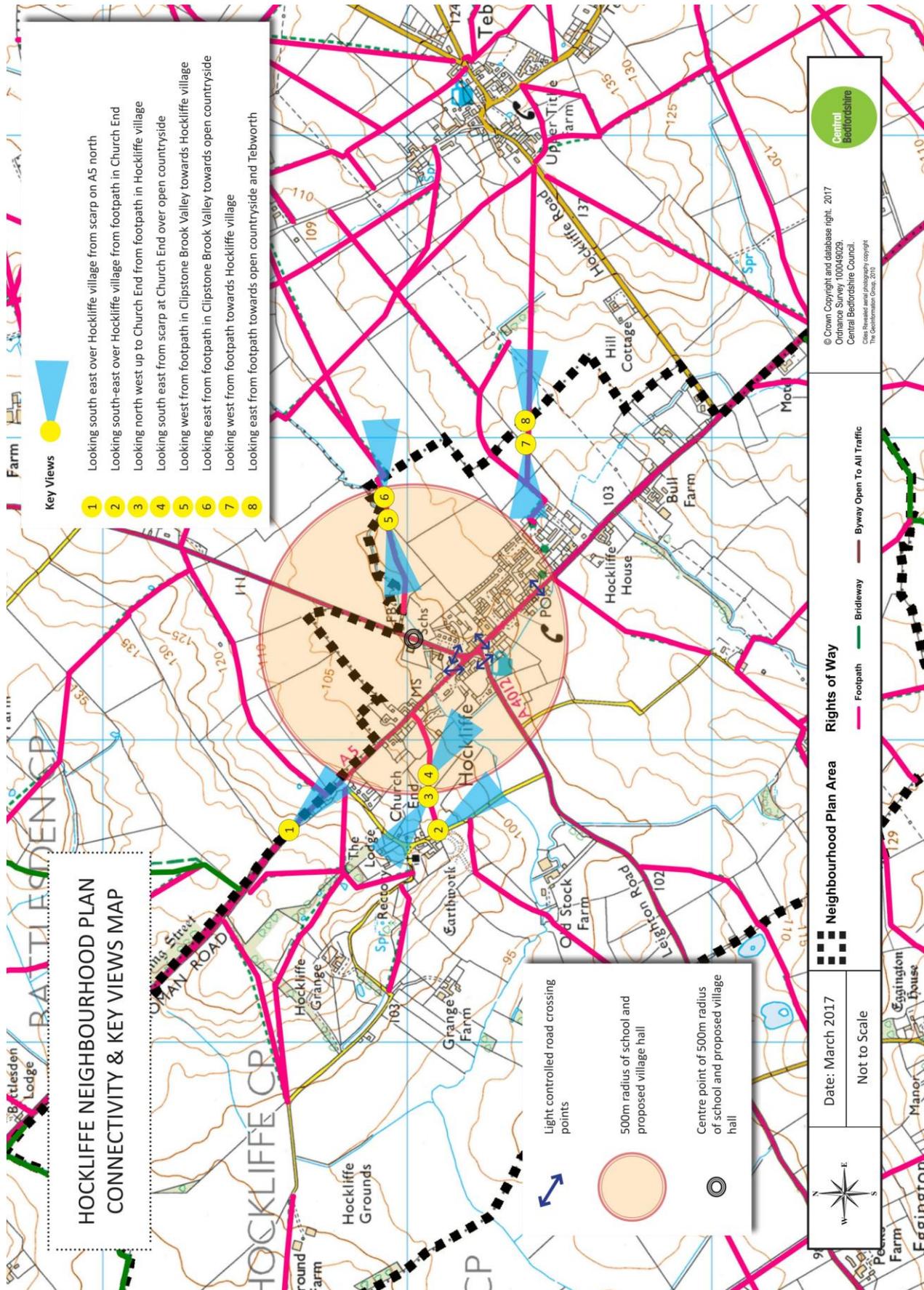
Scale 1:15000



# Appendix B: Policies map



# Appendix C: connectivity and key views



## Approach to Key Views

It is important that the landscape character of the countryside around the village is protected. It was considered necessary to undertake field surveys, mapping and topographic study to define key views and relate these to specific locations where great care will be needed with the design of new development or where any larger scale built development is unlikely to be acceptable. They provide a basis for the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, including locations for new housing, design criteria, protecting local open spaces, and criteria for considering other development. Views have been identified using desk based and field surveys, taking account of key public locations in the village, including public footpaths, roads and lanes and gathering places. The resultant key views are listed below with photographs and shown on the Connectivity & Key Views Map above.

In terms of potential locations for new housing, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Views 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 suggest that development in open countryside, remote from the built-up edge of the village, would not be appropriate.
- Views 4 and 5 suggest that development could be possible closer to the built-up edge of the village, but that care will need to be taken with layout and design.

### 1 Looking south-east over Hockliffe village from scarp on A5 north



**2 Looking south-east over Hockliffe village from footpath in Church End**



**3 Looking north-west up to Church End from footpath in Hockliffe village**



**4 Looking south from scarp at Church End over open countryside**



**Looking west from footpath in Clipstone Brook Valley towards Hockliffe village**



**6 Looking east from footpath in Clipstone Brook Valley towards open countryside**



**7 Looking west and north-west from footpath towards Hockliffe village &  
8 Looking east and south-east from footpath towards open countryside and Tebworth**



# **Appendix D Consultation Report**

## **Contents list**

- 1. Early Days**
- 2. Neighbourhood Plan**
- 3. Regulation 14 Consultation Autumn 2017**
- 4. Regulation 14 outcome**
- 5. Reconsideration of the Plan**
- 6. The second Regulation 14 consultation Winter 2019**

## 1. Early days

1.1 The original driving force for a Neighbourhood Plan in Hockliffe was the village’s desire to have a fully functioning and thriving village hall/community centre. That desire was demonstrated clearly from the responses to the questionnaire which informed the first Hockliffe Parish Plan 2005/2010. The questionnaire was delivered in Summer 2004. An extract from the results is at **Annexe 1**.

1.2 This led to the following action in the resulting Action Plan:

|    |                  |  |                                  |  |             |
|----|------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|-------------|
| 18 | Community centre | Offer every possible form of assistance to the Community Centre group to enable them to complete the project as soon as possible and encourage more communication between the group and the Parish Council (who own the land likely to be used) to avoid any disagreements which might arise in the future | Very little [resource], probably | Parish Council. Parish Plan committee to pass on any relevant details from the survey. | Medium term |
|----|------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|-------------|

1.3 Hockliffe used to have a village hall on the A5 north of the traffic lights, owned by the charity “Village Hall Hockliffe” [Reg No. 300038]. This was closed and the premises sold in the late 1980s. The proceeds of sale were invested by the charity, which became dormant. As a result of the outcome of the Parish Plan, the Village Hall Committee was reconvened in September 2008 following an open invitation to villagers in the Autumn 2008 edition of the Hockliffe Herald (“*You are invited to attend an EGM of Hockliffe Village Hall charity on Monday 29 September 2008 to elect a management committee of the charity.*”) 9 people came forward, formed a committee, and worked hard towards the delivery of a village hall.

1.4 In late 2008/early 2009 the Village Hall Committee carried out its own village survey of all Hockliffe residents. There was a huge 40% response rate. Out of a total of 128 responses, 121 said that they wanted a village hall. There was a significant demand for evening classes, keep-fit classes and social groups (such as Mums and Tots) and women’s groups.

1.5 Planning permission for a village hall at the recreation ground was granted in September 2011, but around this time the Lottery Fund restricted grants for building village halls and without a large cash injection, there was no way that the Village Hall charity could raise the funds to build it.

1.6 The then Vicar of St Nicholas church (Revd Jennie Cappleman) was a member of the Village Hall committee. The church was very much in favour of a village hall, which was seen as another means of bringing the community together. The Vicar and churchwardens are Trustees of the Hillersdon Trust, a long-established charity, which owned two fields behind the White Hart public house in the village. (The Hillersdon land is identified as NLP 297 on the CBC Call for Sites map.) At a Parish Council meeting in March 2012, Revd Jennie Cappleman presented a proposal to use that land for development in order to release funds into the community to:

- deliver the village hall and allotments;
- repair the church and, if possible,
- create a community trust fund with any left-over proceeds.

1.7 This was discussed again at the annual Parish meeting in April 2012. An extract from the Hockliffe Herald of Summer 2012 is at **Annexe 2**.

- 1.8 In July 2012 the Parish Council decided to embark on a second Parish Plan with a view to its feeding into a Neighbourhood Plan if so desired. Part of the Minutes of the first meeting (**Annexe 3**) illustrates the connection between Parish and Neighbourhood Plans.
- 1.9 At this stage, a second site for possible development was already known to the Parish Council. (“Wilderness”, NLP 278 on CBC’s Call for Sites map.)
- 1.10 Accordingly, in 2013 another questionnaire was delivered to all villagers and businesses in Hockliffe. An extract from that questionnaire is at **Annexe 4**.
- 1.11 And here are the results, extracted from the 2013-18 Parish Plan:

**Your responses in summary:**

**New Development:**

100 respondents (24%) were in favour of a small amount of further development in the village, even though it would have to be on Green Belt land. A further 146 (36%) didn’t really want more development in the Green Belt, but were prepared to consider it, whilst 154 (38%) did not want any development in the Green Belt under any circumstances. The remaining 2% expressed their views in their own words. 126 (31%) supported the proposed development at Augustus Road/ Wilderness and 250 (61%) supported the Hillersdon scheme.

**Community Centre:**

357 (87%) wanted the Village Hall Committee to continue their efforts and build a Community Centre and 319 (78%) supported the existing proposal. As to the location, 122 (30%) were in favour of Kilby Road, 200 (49%) wanted the Centre on the Hillersdon land and 57 (14%) expressed a wish to site it on the August Road/Wilderness land, if possible.

- 1.11 And here is part of the ensuing Action Plan:

| <i>Subject</i>                 | <i>Action</i>   | <i>Who</i>       | <i>When</i>             | <i>Progress</i> |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| <b><i>New Development</i></b>  |   |                  |                         |                 |
| <b><i>Hillersdon</i></b>       | <i>Support and encourage this proposed development to happen, having regard to the substantial benefits to the village.</i>   | <i>PC</i>        | <i>Ongoing</i>          |                 |
| <b><i>Green Belt</i></b>       | <i>Discourage and oppose any other residential development in the Green Belt surrounding Hockliffe.</i>   | <i>PC</i>        | <i>Ongoing</i>          |                 |
| <b><i>Types of housing</i></b> | <i>Make residents’ views available to any interested parties.</i>   | <i>PC</i>        | <i>Ongoing</i>          |                 |
| <b><i>Community Centre</i></b> |   |                  |                         |                 |
| <b><i>General</i></b>          | <i>Support the project for a new Community Centre, preferably on the Hillersdon land.<br/>Pass on residents’ views about proposed use of the Centre, its location and any other comments to Village Hall Committee.</i> | <i>PC<br/>PC</i> | <i>Ongoing<br/>2013</i> |                 |

- 1.12 As a result of that the Parish Council resolved In October 2014 to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for Hockliffe and CBC made the formal designation in March 2015.



The Steering Committee therefore decided that it was in the best interests of the village if the Neighbourhood Plan could also be used as a means of deciding where any further development should go rather than have it imposed on the village by CBC. The emerging Local Plan had carried out a “call for sites” and, in the interests of fairness and openness, the Steering Committee decided to contact all the remaining landowners in Hockliffe who had put forward sites to CBC to invite them to engage in the NP process.

2.5 On 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016, CBC was asked to contact all the landowners who had responded to the “call for sites” to ask them to get in touch with the NP group. As a result of that exercise, two more sites came forward, the Anker land (NLP 413 / ALP 125 on CBC’s Call for Sites map) and the Dashwood land (NLP 327).

2.6 Some members of the Steering group were representatives of landowners. It was therefore decided to form a new group which would consist of people with no vested interest in the location of new development and to ask people in the village to come forward to join that new group. Here is an extract from the Hockliffe Herald (Autumn 2016 edition):

*“The NP group has decided that the best way forward will be to form a committee consisting of people without any kind of vested interest in the sites to decide which will best deliver what they think this village needs.*

*And this is where **YOU** come in: several members of the NP group are landowners or their representatives. Clearly, these people cannot have any part in deciding what should be in the final plan, which leaves just 3 or 4 residents to make the decision on your behalf. It would be so much better if more volunteers could come forward to help with this decision. It should only take one or possibly two meetings – so there is **NO LONG TERM COMMITMENT**. But it does need doing.”*

2.7 As a result of that seven villagers came forward who had not previously been part of the NP Steering Group. None of them had any vested interest in any one of the sites under consideration. Their independent recommendation was the proposal put forward in the first iteration of this Plan presented for Regulation 14 consultation in September 2017.

### 3. 1<sup>st</sup> Regulation 14 consultation: Autumn 2017

- 3.1 Once the draft Neighbourhood Plan was ready, a public meeting was called to decide the best and most comprehensive method of carrying out the Regulation 14 consultation, to ensure that the widest audience would have a chance to discuss, ask questions, and make their views known. 14 people attended that meeting.
- 3.2 That consultation consisted of:
- publication of the draft NP on the Parish Council website with hard copies in the school, the White Hart and the local shop;
  - A leaflet drop to every house and business in Hockliffe, with a questionnaire (**Annexe 7**) and explanatory leaflet (**Annexe 8**);
  - 4 drop in meetings: 2 at the school and 2 at the White Hart (Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept 10.30 – 12.30 & Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 6-8 at school; and 6<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> October from 8pm at the pub);
  - An article in the Hockliffe Herald (**Annexe 9**) which was delivered to every house and business at the same time.
- 3.3 Copies of the display material available at the drop-in sessions are in **Annexe 10**. E-mails were sent to the statutory consultees and 5 neighbouring Parish Councils (**Annexe 11**).
- 3.4 The numbers attending the 4 open sessions were as follows:
- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> : Saturday morning in school:       | 49; |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> : Friday evening in the White Hart: | 14; |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> : Wednesday evening in school:      | 7;  |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> : Friday evening in the White Hart: | 19. |
- Several people attended more than one session; and the 7 people at the Wednesday evening event were all steering group members, landowners, or Councillors. No ordinary members of the public attended that session.

### 4. Regulation 14 outcome

- 4.1 In summary, the consultation showed broad support for most of the proposed policies, but significant opposition to the proposals for new development. Many villagers opposed any development on the basis that there was no solid written evidence that new development was coming to Hockliffe anyway. Others were just against new development, particularly in the Green Belt. Villagers' views on future development were split with about 48% in favour of the proposed new development and 52% against. The actual proposed locations had 44% support; some people in favour of development did not like a particular site.
- 4.2 The results of the questionnaire are set out in **Annexe 12** and the summary responses from other consultees are set out in **Annexe 13**.
- 4.3 Notwithstanding the fact that almost half the village was in favour of the quantity and locations of new development, it was clear that the imposition of 180 houses on villagers had significant opposition. In addition the Statutory Consultees had some concerns about the policies and suggested sites. It was time to reconsider the Plan.

## 5. Reconsideration of the Plan

- 5.1 According to the questionnaire responses, support for the village hall had apparently diminished. Maybe this was connected with the fact that the building of a village hall had been held out as a reason for further development. Those opposed to such development were likely to reject the need for a village hall, because the only way to deliver one was through such development.
- 5.2 The Parish Council therefore decided to carry out an informal Facebook survey to find out, on the assumption that a village hall was built, the likely extent and variety of use amongst villagers. The results of that survey (**Annexe 14**) provide some justification for the view that the apparent reduction in support for the village hall in the Regulation 14 consultation was down to its link with development. Once this link was removed, the village's enthusiasm for a village hall was back. (Villagers' Facebook profile pictures have been deleted for GDPR purposes.)
- 5.3 In January 2018 CBC published the pre-submission draft of the Local Plan and this time there was a specific allocation of new development for Hockliffe on 3 sites, one of which was completely new to the village and had not featured in any earlier Calls for Sites. It was also clear that two of the sites in the draft NP had been rejected by CBC: Wilderness (NLP 278) on the ground of potential flooding; and Waddington's (ALP 184 / NLP 258) on the ground that development would be contrary to the National Framework. That latter site had been intended to house the new village hall. Discussions with representatives of the new site (HAS26 on the new Local Plan map) have led to an understanding that access would be to and from the Woburn Road and not the A5, and that land will be made available for an expansion of the school site, additional parking and the new village hall.
- 5.4 At several Parish Council meetings the Council was asked to create an opportunity for villagers to have a say in where development should take place before the second iteration of the NP was finalised. These open sessions were held on 5 and 8 December 2018 and were publicised by a notice in the village shop noticeboard and on the village Facebook site (**Annexe 15**).
- 5.5 Attendees were given 4 possible options and, if they did not like any of those, the option to draw or describe their own choice. The results are at **Annexe 16** and informed the second version of the Plan.

## 6. The second Regulation 14 consultation

- 6.1 The second Regulation 14 consultation was publicised by:
- Posters on the Village Noticeboards and attached to lampposts around the village;
  - Posts on the village Facebook page;
  - Emails from the school to parents.
- 6.2 Copies of the publicity materials are at **Annexe 17**.