

Appendix C4 Environment Agency consultation response

HANSLOPE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

HANSLOPE, MILTON KEYNES

Our ref: Date:

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Thank you for consulting us on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan for Hanslope. We have had to prioritise our limited resources and must focus on influencing plans where the environmental risks and opportunities are highest. For the purposes of neighbourhood planning, we have assessed those authorities who have “up to date” local plans (plans adopted within the previous 5 years) as being of lower risk, and those authorities who have older plans (adopted more than 5 years ago) as being at greater risk. We aim to reduce flood risk and protect and enhance the water environment, and with consideration to the key environmental constraints within our remit, we have then tailored our approach to reviewing each neighbourhood plan accordingly.

We note the Milton Keynes Local Plan was last reviewed and adopted in March 2019. We have also identified important environmental constraints, within our matrix for currently screening neighbourhood plans that affect this Neighbourhood Plan Area. We are, therefore, providing you with the following advice which identifies opportunities for you to strengthen the Plan and enhance the scope of environmental Objectives considered.

Water Quality

We have identified that the Plan area boundary includes the Hanslope Water Recycling Centre, which is currently operating close to or exceeding its permitted capacity. Providing the Plan does not allocate sites for growth development across the Plan period, we do not have any significant concerns. We would still expect to see consideration for any windfall developments captured in a relevant policy for Water Quality in the catchment of the Plan Area and serving WRC.

Water Resources

Although the Neighbourhood Plan does not currently allocate sites for development, we recommend the Plan includes a Policy that captures the important emerging issue of Water Resources in the event of any in-fill development coming forward during the plan period, not yet allocated. The following text should assist you.

Being in one of the driest areas of the country, our environment has come under significant pressure from potable water demand. New developments should make a significant contribution towards reducing water demand and mitigate against the risk of deterioration to our rivers, groundwater and habitats from groundwater abstraction. We recommend you check the capacity of available water supplies with the water company, in line with the emerging 2024 Water Resources Management Plan which is due to be published in 2023. The Local Planning Authorities Water Cycle Study and Local Plan may indicate constraints in water supply and provide

recommendations for phasing of development to tie in with new alternative strategic supplies.

New development should as a minimum meet the highest levels of water efficiency standards, as per the policies in the adopted Local Plan. In most cases development will be expected to achieve 110 litres per person per day as set out in the Building Regulations &c. (Amendment) Regulations 2015. However, a higher standard of water efficiency (e.g. 85 l/p/d) should be considered, looking at all options including rainwater harvesting and greywater systems. Using the water efficiency calculator in Part G of the Building Regulations enables you to calculate the devices and fittings required to ensure a home is built to the right specifications to meet the 110 l/p/d requirement. We recommend all new non-residential development of 1000sqm gross floor area or more should meet the BREEAM 'excellent' standards for water consumption.

Developments that require their own abstraction where it will exceed 20 cubic metres per day from a surface water source (river, stream) or from underground strata (via borehole or well) will require an abstraction licence under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991. There is no guarantee that a licence will be granted as this is dependent on available water resources and existing protected rights. The relevant abstraction licencing strategy for your area provides information on water availability and licencing policy at Abstraction licencing strategies (CAMS process) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Informative

We encourage you to seek ways in which your neighbourhood plan can improve the local environment. For your information, together with Natural England, Historic England and Forestry Commission, we have published joint guidance on neighbourhood planning, which sets out sources of environmental information and ideas on incorporating the environment into plans. This is available at: How to consider the environment in Neighbourhood plans - Locality Neighbourhood Planning

We trust that this advice is useful.

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