

SILSOE
NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLAN – STATEMENT
ON COMMUNITY
CONSULTATION

August 2018

Foreword

Community Consultation

This document accompanies the submission of the Silsoe Neighbourhood Plan.

For further detail, please refer to the Silsoe Neighbourhood Plan.

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1 Introduction

1.1 This Consultation Statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 in respect of the Silsoe Neighbourhood Plan 2018.

1.2 Section 15(2) of Part 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 state that the Consultation Statement should:

- Contain details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed Neighbourhood Plan;
- Explain how they were consulted;
- Summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted;
- Describe how the issues and concerns raised have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in changes made to the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.

1.3 We seek to address these requirements through this document.

2 Background

2.1 The Silsoe Parish Plan committee was formed in early 2006 and was adopted in 2008 for a period of 10 years.

2.2 During this time, Silsoe has gone through significant change. This was recognised by the original Parish Plan committee, Chair Geoff Warwick, who said at the time -

“The task of compiling a ten-year plan for Silsoe has been made much more difficult because of major social and economic change in the village with Cranfield University vacating the Silsoe campus coincident with the demise of the Agricultural Institute at Wrest Park. The impact of these two events has resulted firstly in the inevitable development of the vacated campus site – it is planned to build approximately 500 houses over a 10-year period which is likely to double the village population. Secondly, Wrest Park and House have been taken over by English Heritage to be restored as a national visitor attraction.” **See Appendix 1 Silsoe Parish Plan 2008 - Summary**

2.3 Both these events have taken place and have significantly impacted Silsoe, making a Neighbourhood Plan a logical and important next step.

2.4 In 2016, after the Localism Act had established the concept of Neighbourhood Plans, the Parish Council decided that it would undertake further work and prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council received a letter from Central Bedfordshire Council in December 2016 notifying the Parish Council designation of the area. **See Appendix 2 Decision Notice**

2.5 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by a Steering Group, comprising Parish Councillors and residents. This steering committee has organised a number of activities – including workshops, drop-in sessions, residents’ survey and information updates to ensure that the views, comments and issues of concern to residents have been taken into consideration during the preparation of this Plan.

2.6 Section 3 of this Statement gives a brief synopsis of the consultation undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan.

3 Overview of Consultation Process

3.1 In May 2016, Silsoe Parish Council completed a Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) Housing Needs Survey. Along with the changes made to the village with the development of the Cranfield University site and the interest from Gladman developers, it became clear that Silsoe needed to take more control over planning and development within the village. **See Appendix 3 BRCC Housing Needs Survey – May 2016**

3.2 After a talk from Siobhan Vincent from Central Bedfordshire Council at a Parish Council meeting on 12th October 2016, it was confirmed by Silsoe Parish Council that Silsoe would create their own Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Helen Flack agreed to take the lead, along with three other councillors – Julie McGrory, Roger Vass and Ann Webb – on behalf of the Council. **See Appendix 4 Silsoe Minutes Oct 2016**

3.3 Preliminary background research was undertaken, and a follow-up meeting was arranged with Siobhan to discuss next steps. All three councillors attended the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan consultation in Barton-le-clay on 26th October 2016.

3.4 At the same time, the Parish Council website and Facebook page was updated to ask for volunteers and invite people to attend our first meeting at the Community Sports Centre on 15th November 2016. **See Appendix 5 Website - October 2016**

3.5 The Steering Committee was formed, with the Parish Councillors joined by residents – Mick Hill, Helen Skepper, Peter & Angela Mileham, Jane Blumsom, Peter Offer and Jeff Offer. Meetings have been – generally – monthly and we have minuted our meetings, which are available on our website. **See Appendix 6 SPC Website NP Minutes**

3.6 Our Neighbourhood Plan area was designated through a Decision Notice on 12th December 2016.

3.7 The first of regular – normally monthly – updates in Silsoe News was made about the Neighbourhood Plan in February 2017. Silsoe News is the Parish Magazine that is delivered to every residence in the Parish -1295 copies - with extra copies available from the shop and the church; 15 in the shop; 10 in the church. Archive copies are also available through the Silsoe Parish Council Website. **See Appendix 7 Silsoe News Archive**

3.8 Our first exhibition took place on 26th February 2017 at the Silsoe Pancake Races, where we had a stand in the Village Hall to explain what the Neighbourhood Plan was all about. Around 30 residents stopped by the exhibition to talk to us about it – there were about 300 attendees to the Races. **See Appendix 8 Exhibition photos 26.02.17**

3.9 Between 1 May and 2 June 2017, we undertook a survey of all residents and businesses about Silsoe and to inform the Neighbourhood Plan. We advertised this through –

- Silsoe News
- Website
- Facebook – Parish Council and Silsoe Network pages

- Surveys hand delivered to every residence and local businesses
- Collection points with spare surveys at Aspects on Newbury Lane, the Community Sports Centre, Chestnut Avenue and Silsoe Newsagents, High Street

3.10 We had 302 responses in total from Residents, and the responses were used to build the foundations of the Neighbourhood Plan. **See Appendix 9 – Residents Survey and Appendix 10 – Residents Survey Results**

3.11 The Business Survey was sent out at the same time and in the same way. We had 14 responses and enabled us to understand the viewpoint from local businesses. **See Appendix 11 – Business Survey and Appendix 12 Results of Initial Survey to Local Businesses in Silsoe**

3.12 The results of the surveys were presented back to villagers at an exhibition at the Village Hall, and at a stand at the Family Fun Day. This was an opportunity to present our findings back to villagers, so they could hear what other people were also saying. We had 65 attendees to the Village Hall and 42 to the Family Fun Day. **See Appendix 13 June Exhibition 2017**

3.13 Banners were placed at key points around the village from June 2017, to ensure locals could see where to find information on the Neighbourhood Plan. **See Appendix 14 Banner**

3.14 As a result of the interactions with the public, Jon Balaam was able to work on the first phase design of the Silsoe Green Infrastructure Plan (GI Plan), which would update the GI Plan from 2010 and replace it to be more relevant to the village that Silsoe has become.

3.15 Alongside that, the Village Design Statement was created to guide developers for the future.

3.16 Once these documents were completed, we were able to present them back to gain feedback from villagers. The Village Design Statement was open to be read and subject to a Facebook Poll between 7 and 18 January 2018 - **See Appendix 15 Facebook Survey**

- 93% said - I am Happy with it
- 7% I do not like it
- 956 reached
- 28 votes

3.17 At the next exhibition on January 18th, 2018 at the Village Hall, we were able to talk about the progress of Neighbourhood Plan and present the Village Design Statement to villagers who are not online, gathering comments to inform the second phase of Green Infrastructure Plan. We had 33 attendees contributing to this next phase. **See Appendix 16 Exhibition January 2018**

3.18 After positive feedback on the Village Design Statement, with no negative comments to be addressed, the Steering Committee presented it to Silsoe Parish Council, who agreed to adopt it at the meeting on 21st February 2018. **See Appendix 17 Silsoe Minutes Feb 18**

3.19 From April 1st until 14th May 2018, as a pre-consultation and final say from villagers before Regulation 14 Consultation, the draft Neighbourhood Plan was presented for comments to residents, supported by the Village Design Statement. At the same time, the Greensand Trust surveyed residents and asked for their feedback on projects and how locals wanted them prioritised. There were 84 responses in total. **See Appendix 18 April 2018**

3.20 On the 10th April, we ran a lunch event for local businesses based at Wrest Park House, where we were able to add to the input gained from local businesses in 2017. **See Appendix 19 Business Lunch April 2018**

3.21 To ensure we were reaching as broad a demographic in the village as possible, we also attended the Silsoe SOS Tea Rooms on 1st May 2018, where copies of the draft Neighbourhood Plan, Summary of Policies and Village Design Statement were available for reading and taking away to read, as well as discussing it with the steering committee. We were able to reach 36 residents by doing this. **See Appendix 20 SOS Tea Rooms 1st May 2018**

3.22 The consultation with residents on the Green Infrastructure Plan is set out in detail in the GI Plan which is an accompanying document to the Neighbourhood Plan.

4 Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation Process

4.1 Regulation 14 Consultation took place between May 18th and June 29th, 2018

4.2 An email was sent to the statutory consultees listed – **see Appendix 21 Regulation 14 Consultees July 2018**

4.3 A copy of the email sent to statutory consultees can be found here – **See Appendix 22 Email Sent to Consultees**

4.4 A comments form was also provided for Consultees to make their comments on – **See Appendix 23 Comments form for Consultees**

4.5 All the consultation documents - Pre-submission Draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, draft GI Plan, the Village Design Statement and a Summary of our policies - were posted on the Parish Council website. The website was updated to a new address on June 14th and all documents were available over both websites – **See Appendix 24 Website and Facebook Notices**

4.6 Printed copies of the Pre-submission Draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Village Design Statement and a Summary of our policies was also available for residents to view and comment on further – advertised through Silsoe News, website and Facebook

5 Key Issues raised from Regulation 14 Consultation

5.1 Responses were received from five statutory consultees, three landowner/agents and one from residents, their comments are recorded in Responses from Consultees. This is included as a separate document.

5.2 The resident was concerned about development within the countryside areas of Silsoe.

5.3 Central Bedfordshire provided a range of responses which included some general comments to correct some of the CBC Local Plan references, spelling and grammar as well as confirmation of some terms used, as well as confirmation that no assets would be impacted, as well as some issues around the SNP traffic policies and adding in some extra detail on village assets.

5.4 Anglian Water noted the desire for local evidence of historic flooding and asked for SuDs – Sustainable Drainage Systems – to be identified as the preferred method of surface water disposal

5.5 National Grid noted that none of their assets would be impacted by the NP.

5.6 Natural England highlighted that Silsoe is in the setting of the Chilterns AONB (Area of Natural Beauty) and recommended a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment should any development come forward.

5.7 Historic England noted that our policies should safeguard the significant number of heritage assets within Silsoe and has suggested that we add more detail on listed buildings, ACVs (assets of Community Value) as well as non-heritage assets. Suggestions were also made to protect Registered Parks and Gardens, as well as making even stronger links between the Village Design Statement and the Neighbourhood Plan. Projects were also mentioned for funds raised from development in the area – CILs (Community Infrastructure Levy) – that could be used for the protection of historic assets.

5.8 A landowner provided accurate information on a field boundary, as well as giving specific feedback on our Employment & Economy policies and Transport policies. The request was for them to align more with national and strategic CBC policy.

5.9 The other two landowner agents that responded agents due to their interest in housing development on farmland outside the Settlement Envelope, pointed out the issue of unmet needs from Luton not being addressed, plus some issues around either the CBC Local Plan not yet being adopted or repetition of policies from the Local Plan. A more positive tone towards development within Silsoe was requested - especially in light of the Appeal decision from the Gladman enquiry in April 2018, with some specific suggestions on wording given, and alternative interpretations of the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework).

6 Addressing of Regulation 14 Issues

6.1 How the issues raised at Regulation 14 Consultation stage have been considered and, where relevant, addressed

6.2 **Regulation 14 Consultee Comments** is included as a separate document and provides a log of all the comments made at Regulation 14 stage. The right-hand column in this table provides a response from the NP steering group, and details, where applicable, any subsequent changes made to the plan.

Along with general changes to the Plan on references to maps, photos and CBC policies, as well as some additions to the Appendices, the key policy changes made to the Plan are –

Historic Environment Policies

Historic Environment Policy SNP/HE1 and has been updated to –

- *Great weight is given by this Neighbourhood Plan to the conservation of areas of land that are Registered Parks and Gardens. Harm to the significance of these areas, caused either by development within them or by development in their setting, should be avoided. Where a development may cause harm, applicants must clearly demonstrate how the scheme has sought to avoid or minimise it. Where harm remains, it must be clearly and convincingly justified and, in line with policy HE2 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan, development will be refused unless the public benefits of the development justify the loss of significance.*
- *A Landscape Visual Impact Assessment will be undertaken for each new proposal to protect the setting of the Chilterns AONB, which protects views towards as well as from the designated area. as well as the “Loss of features of historic interest, particularly if these are contiguous with the AONB”*
- *To take account of assets of historic environment value, especially but not exclusively Wrest Park, seek to protect them and their context, and raises awareness of the historic environment’s value.*
- *To protect areas of historic parkland where not under the ownership of Historic England.*

*This policy will be in line with CBC Local Plan Policy **HE2: Historic Parks and Gardens Development, which will supersede Policy CS15 of the Central Bedfordshire (North) Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD***

*It will also be in line with **Development affecting the setting of the Chilterns AONB – Adopted June 2011 (Rev 1) Paragraphs 14-20 and -***

- ***Policy L4: The distinctive character of buildings, rural settlements and their landscape setting should be conserved and enhanced.***

- **Policy L5: Developments which detract from the Chilterns' special character should be resisted.**

*This policy reflects the recommendation made in the **Silsoe Green Infrastructure Plan 2018**.*

Historic Environment Policy SNP/HE-2 has been strengthened to reference our local heritage information so that CBC have an even better understanding of the Heritage Environment in Silsoe. It has also been amended to specifically comment on heritage assets at risk or in poor condition, including any areas that detract from its character or appearance.

Historic Environment Policy SNP/HE-3 has been added to reference orchards and sandstone walls specifically to reflect the recommendation made in the **Silsoe Green Infrastructure Plan 2018**

Strategic Policies

Strategic Policy SNP/SP-1 is now amended to show what residential development will be supported

Strategic Policy SNP/SP-2 is now amended using wording that states that retail, service and community facilities “will be supported”.

Strategic Policy SNP/SP-3 is now clarifying that the enhancement and maintenance of our rural community is vital and that this is linked to our GI Plan and Local Green Spaces that will protect the views and green spaces that are important to our community. The planned new Local Green Spaces that will provide a connected network of green infrastructure in Silsoe Parish. It also clarifies that we will support adjoining village GI Plans, as well as looking to protect the setting of Silsoe in the Chilterns AONB.

Strategic Policy SNP/SP-4 has been removed to ensure there is no duplication between policies Policy SNP/SP-1, 2, 3 and SNP/HE-1.

Retail Policy SNP/RP-1 is now updated to link it to SNP/SP-2 and using wording “will be supported”.

Housing Policies

Housing Policies SNP/HP-1, SNP/HP-2, SNP/HP-3 - the wording in these policies have been amended to avoid repetition with other SNP and CBC Local Plan policies.

High Quality Design Policies

High Quality Design Policy SNP/HQ-1 has been updated to make it even clearer that the use of local materials and good quality, innovative design will be supported to meet the requirements of NPPF paragraph 60, and to make stronger links to the Silsoe Village Design Statement.

High Quality Design Policy SNP/HQ-2 – this policy has been changed to match HQ2: Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy and to avoid repetition.

High Quality Design Policy SNP/HQ-3 The wording in these policies have been amended to be clearer and include the responsibilities of CBC.

High Quality Policies SNP/HQ-3, SNP/HQ-4 Amendments made to wording, to reflect Paragraphs 42 and 43 of the NPPF, *“Advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services....In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband. They should aim to keep the numbers of radio and telecommunications masts and the sites for such installations to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network. Existing masts, buildings and other structures should be used, unless the need for a new site has been justified. Where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate”*

High Quality Policies SNP /HQ-5, SNP/HQ-6 – HQ5 has been withdrawn and replaced by HQ6 due to repetition and the new HQ5 has been amended for greater clarity.

Development in the Countryside Policy

Development in the Countryside Policy SNP/DC-1 has been updated to refer to the updated policies of CBC Local Plan policies of DC1, DC2 and DC3.

Environment Policies

Environment Policy SNP/EP-1 has been updated to reflect stronger links to the Silsoe GI Plan 2018.

Environment Policy SNP/EP-2 has been updated to reflect the use of SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) as the preferred method of surface water disposal.

Environment Policy SNP/EP-3 / 4 / 5 / 6 have been updated to reflect stronger links to recommendations in the Silsoe GI Plan 2018, avoid any repetition and link to the Chilterns AONB.

Employment & Economy Policies

Employment & Economy Policy SNP/EE-1 / 2 Amendments made to wording to reflect Article 4 direction and remove recommendation of link road, as it is now in the stated list of projects. Some flexibility around siting as long as other policies are met.

Employment & Economy Policy SNP/EE-4 removed.

Transport Policies

Transport Policy SNP/TP-1, SNP/TP-2, SNP/TP-3 Amalgamated due to repetition into TP-1, TP-2 now reflecting a need for charging points for low emissions vehicles.