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Report on The Stukeleys Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022 - 2036

An Examination undertaken for Huntingdonshire District Council with the support of The Stukeleys Parish Council on the September 2022 submission version of the Plan.

Independent Examiner: David Hogger BA MSc MRTPI MCIHT

Date of Report: 8 February 2023

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Main Findings - Executive Summary

From my examination of The Stukeleys Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan/TSNP) and its supporting documentation including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to the policy modifications set out in this report, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body – The Stukeleys Parish Council;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – as shown on Map 2 (page 13) of the document;
- The Plan specifies the period to which it is to take effect – 2022 to 2036; and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements.

I have considered whether the referendum area should extend beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates and have concluded that it should not.

1. Introduction and Background

The Stukeleys Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2036

- 1.1 The Parish of The Stukeleys, which lies to the north of Huntingdon, includes two main settlements – namely Little Stukeley and Great Stukeley. There is a range of housing types and ages in the Parish and although there has been significant recent development in the Huntingdon area, the Parish still retains a number of attractive characteristics – indeed Little Stukeley is designated as a Conservation Area. The Parish includes Huntingdon Racecourse and RAF Alconbury, part of which is being developed to form the new community of Alconbury Weald.
- 1.2 I saw on my visit, that the Parish currently enjoys only a small number of community facilities and services, for example a village hall and a number of churches. However, the TSNP (paragraphs 22.5 and 22.6) confirms that the 'new' settlement of Alconbury Weald will include a range of new facilities such as a convenience store, a primary school and a community centre.
- 1.3 The Consultation Statement records that work on The Stukeleys Neighbourhood Plan started in 2016, following designation. A steering group was formed, drop-in sessions were arranged in March and April 2017 and questionnaires were distributed. Although work on the TSNP

stalled during the preparation and examination of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, progress resumed, with further consultation, in April 2019. However, there were further impediments to progress, including the Covid pandemic. Nevertheless, a new steering group was established in 2021 and a professional advisor was appointed, thus enabling work on the Neighbourhood Plan to progress.

The Independent Examiner

- 1.4 As the Plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of TSNP by Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC), with the agreement of The Stukeleys Parish Council (TSPC).
- 1.5 I am a chartered town planner and former government Planning Inspector, with extensive experience in the preparation, examination and implementation of development plans and other planning policy documents. I am an independent examiner, and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the draft Plan.

The Scope of the Examination

- 1.6 As the independent examiner I am required to produce this report and recommend either:
- (a) that the neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum without changes; or
 - (b) that modifications are made and that the modified neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum; or
 - (c) that the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to a referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 1.7 The scope of the examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)('the 1990 Act'). The examiner must consider:
- Whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions.
 - Whether the plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ('the 2004 Act'). These are:
 - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the local planning authority;
 - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
 - it specifies the period during which it has effect;

- it does not include provisions and policies for “excluded development”; and
- it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area.
- Whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum.
- Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)('the 2012 Regulations’).

1.8 I have considered only matters that fall within Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, with one exception. That is the requirement that the Plan is compatible with the Human Rights Convention.

The Basic Conditions

1.9 The ‘Basic Conditions’ are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:

- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
- be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations (under retained EU law)¹; and
- meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

1.10 Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (“the 2017 Regulations”).²

¹ The existing body of environmental regulation is retained in UK law.

² This revised Basic Condition came into force on 28 December 2018 through the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018.

2. Approach to the Examination

Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 The Development Plan for this part of Huntingdonshire, not including documents relating to minerals and waste development, consists of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
- 2.2 The planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) offers guidance on how this policy should be implemented. A revised NPPF was published on 20 July 2021. All references in this report are to the 2021 NPPF and its accompanying PPG.

Submitted Documents

- 2.3 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, including those submitted which comprise:
- the draft of The Stukeleys Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2036, September 2022;
 - the Plan (Map 2) on page 13 of the TSNP which identifies the area to which the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan relates;
 - the Consultation Statement, September 2022;
 - the Basic Conditions Statement, September 2022;
 - the Settlement Boundary Methodology, September 2022;
 - the Local Green Spaces Evidence, September 2022;
 - the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Request and the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening Request (both dated September 2022);
 - all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation; and
 - the responses from both HDC and TSPC of 12 January 2023 to my Questions dated 12 December 2022.³

Site Visit

- 2.4 I made an unaccompanied site visit to the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 20 December 2022 to familiarise myself with the locality, and visit relevant sites and areas referenced in the Plan and evidential documents.

Written Representations with or without Public Hearing

- 2.5 This examination has been dealt with by written representations. I considered hearing sessions to be unnecessary as the consultation responses clearly articulated the objections to the Plan and presented

³ These documents can be viewed at:

<https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-planning/>

and at: <https://consult.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/kse/event/37107>

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arguments for and against the Plan's suitability to proceed to a referendum.

Modifications

- 2.6 Where necessary, I have recommended modifications to the Plan (**PMs**) in this report in order that it meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. For ease of reference, I have listed these modifications separately in the Appendix.

3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights

Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 3.1 TSNP has been prepared and submitted for examination by the Parish Council, which is the qualifying body for an area that was originally designated by HDC on 3 June 2016.
- 3.2 It is the only Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish and does not relate to land outside the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Plan Period

- 3.3 The Plan specifies clearly the period to which it is to take effect, which is from 2022 to 2036.

Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation

- 3.4 The Consultation Statement clearly explains the processes and procedures that have been followed during the preparation of the TSNP. Since the start of the process in 2016, it is clear that considerable effort has been placed in seeking the views of residents and other interested parties. A wide range of issues have been raised and they have been appropriately considered by the Parish Council.
- 3.5 An appropriate range of consultation methods were used, including questionnaires, leaflets, the use of social media, an open day and public meetings. The Consultation Statement clearly demonstrates that significant effort has been placed on undertaking the consultations and assessing the responses that were submitted.
- 3.6 I am able to conclude that the opportunity to contribute towards the preparation of the Plan has been available to all interested parties at the relevant stages, including at both the Regulation 14 stage (8 May 2022 to 19 June 2022) and the Regulation 16 stage (28 September 2022 to 10 November 2022). I am satisfied that all the relevant requirements in the 2012 Regulations have been met. I also consider that, overall, the approach taken towards the preparation of the TSNP has been conducted in a fair, proportionate and inclusive manner. The relevant advice on plan

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making and community engagement (for example, PPG Reference ID: 61-030-20180913) has been heeded and I consider the legal requirements have been met.

Development and Use of Land

3.7 The Plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in accordance with s.38A of the 2004 Act.

Excluded Development

3.8 The Plan does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'.

Human Rights

3.9 I have seen no evidence that the Plan breaches Human Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998), and it is not a matter that has been raised by any of the respondents, including HDC.

4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

EU Obligations

4.1 The SEA Screening Request and the HRA Screening Request (both dated September 2022) conclude that neither an SEA nor an HRA is required. I have read the documents and the representations submitted from interested parties, including the District Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England, and Historic England. I note that there were no objections to the conclusions as set out in the two aforementioned documents and I saw no evidence that would lead me to doubt the findings of the two Screening Requests. Accordingly, following my assessment, I am satisfied that the relevant EU obligations (as retained in UK law) have been met.

Main Issues

4.2 I have approached the assessment of compliance with the Basic Conditions of The Stukeleys Neighbourhood Plan as two main matters:

- General issues of compliance of the Plan, as a whole; and
- Specific issues of compliance of the Plan policies.

General Issues of Compliance of the Plan

[National Policy, Sustainable Development and the Development Plan](#)

4.3 There are 2 main sections in the TSNP, relating to Sustainable Growth and the Natural and Built Environment. The Basic Conditions Statement

(September 2022) seeks to explain how the TSNP has met the legal requirements; taken into account national policies; and not breached EU and sustainability obligations.

- 4.4 Subject to the detailed comments that I set out below, I conclude that the TSNP has had proper regard to national policy and guidance. I also conclude that, subject to the recommendations that I make:
- The TSNP is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Development Plan for the area, and that overall, the document provides an appropriate framework that will ensure that the Parish Council's vision for the area, as set out on page 14, will be achieved; and
 - That the policies as modified, are supported by appropriate evidence, are sufficiently clear and unambiguous and that they can be applied with confidence.⁴

Specific Issues of Compliance of the Plan's Policies

Introductory Paragraphs (pages 7 to 12)

- 4.5 The Introduction (page 7) explains the purpose of the TINP and summarises the planning framework within which the document has been prepared. There is a brief introduction to The Stukeleys and a valuable paragraph (and plan) which summarises the relationship between the Parish and the town of Huntingdon. The Neighbourhood Plan Area is identified on Map 2 (page 13).

Vision and Objectives (page 14)

- 4.6 The vision supports sustainable growth whilst protecting the existing character of the Parish and would appear to be an appropriate reflection of the aspirations of local residents (as expressed through the consultation).
- 4.7 Four objectives are set out on pages 14 and 15 under the headings of 'Promote sustainable development'; 'Conserve and enhance the natural environment of The Stukeleys'; 'Protect and develop the community of The Stukeleys'; and 'Protect and enhance the built environment of The Stukeleys'. These objectives appear to closely reflect the aspirations of the local community and appropriately reflect national policy and the policies of the Development Plan. Paragraph 16.3 summarises how the policies relate to the identified objectives. The achievement of the objectives should ensure that the vision is realised.

Sustainable Growth – Policies 1 to 5 (page 17)

- 4.8 This section of the TSNP provides an explanation of the relationship between the Parish and proposed development to the north of Huntingdon

⁴ PPG Reference ID: 41-041-20140306.

at Alconbury Weald and RAF Alconbury, as proposed in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (policies SEL 1.1 and SEL 1.2). There is a clear explanation of the strategic planning framework for the area, which also includes the eastern half of the housing allocation at Ermine Street (policy HU 1).

- 4.9 Footnotes 12 and 13 (page 18) are extracts from the strategic policies. This repetition is not supported by HDC⁵, especially as relevant parts of the policies and text are excluded. To that end clarity is not achieved. I share the view of the District Council and consequently, I recommend that footnotes 12 and 13 are modified, primarily to remove repetition (**PM1**).
- 4.10 The District Council⁶ suggests modifications to the first sentence of paragraph 17.3 (page 19) and to the second bullet point. I consider these are necessary in the interests of clarity and recommend them in **PM2**. Similarly, amendments are suggested with regard to paragraph 18.3⁷ and paragraph 18.5⁸, which I agree are also necessary for clarity (**PM3** and **PM4**).
- 4.11 The wording used at the end of paragraph 19.3 is set out in the form of a policy, rather than supporting text and may give rise to confusion. I agree with the District Council⁹ that this sentence should be deleted (**PM5**). HDC also suggest the inclusion of a new policy with regard to design and sustainability. However, the Parish Council confirms (in its answer to my question 21) that issues of design are adequately addressed in other documentation, including in Local Plan policies (for example, LP 11:Design Context, LP 12:Design Implementation and LP 13:Placemaking), and I accept that position.
- 4.12 Similarly I agree with HDC that paragraph 19.6 lacks clarity¹⁰ and should be modified as set out in **PM6**.

Policy 1 Settlement Boundary (page 14)

- 4.13 The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 provides a written definition of 'built-up area' and to assist the implementation of that policy, the Parish Council has proposed to identify on a plan where the boundary of the built-up areas should run. Map 3a identifies the boundary for Great Stukeley and Map 3b shows the boundary for Little Stukeley.
- 4.14 I have read the Settlement Boundary Methodology (September 2022) and among other things, this sets out what the built-up area will include and what it will exclude. I am satisfied that the approach adopted by the

⁵ See Representation STNP:28.

⁶ See Representation STNP:29.

⁷ See Representation STNP:30.

⁸ See Representation STNP:31.

⁹ See Representation STNP:32.

¹⁰ See Representation STNP:33.

Parish Council is appropriate and I note that the District Council has no objections to the methodology followed. It has been suggested that the use of a settlement boundary is too rigid an approach¹¹ but I disagree because it provides an appropriate level of clarity and certainty for the decision maker and other interested parties.

- 4.15 The District Council did, however, raise the issue¹² of compliance between policy 1 and strategic Local Plan policy LP7: Small Settlements. Modified wording has been agreed between the two Councils¹³ and I agree that it will add clarity for decision makers and therefore I recommend **PM7**.
- 4.16 It was suggested by the District Council (in response to my Questions) that footnote 23 (page 22) should be moved into paragraph 19.5 but I do not consider this necessary to meet the Basic Conditions. The footnote alone is sufficiently clear.
- 4.17 With regard to the Three Horseshoes in Great Stukeley¹⁴, it is noted that the proposed settlement boundary would run through the site – excluding land to the north, which did not appear to be well maintained or display any particular features of interest. Having visited the site, I could see no substantive reason why all of the land should not fall within the settlement boundary. I am satisfied that new development could assimilate well into this setting without causing harm to the character of the area or the living conditions of local residents. I note that the Parish Council would not object to this amendment to the boundary. Accordingly, I recommend, in **PM8**, that the settlement boundary, as identified on Map 3a be re-drawn to include all of the Three Horseshoes site (see paragraph 4.18 below).

Policy 2 Opportunity Sites for enhancement (page 25)

- 4.18 Two sites have been specifically identified for enhancement – The Three Horseshoes (see paragraph 4.17 above) and the former Three Horseshoes Farm (see Map 4 on page 26). The supporting text describes the existing sites and their uses and summarises the opportunities for enhancement. Policy 2 establishes the expectations of the local community but, in the interests of clarity, the Parish Council¹⁵ has suggested revised wording for the policy and I agree that the suggested wording is necessary. I therefore recommend **PM9**, the wording of which better reflects the current situation and will provide clarity for the decision maker.

¹¹ See Representation STNP:49.

¹² See: STNP:34.

¹³ See Joint Response to my Questions dated 12 January 2023.

¹⁴ See Regulation 16 consultation response dated 23 November 2022 from the Caldecotte Group.

¹⁵ See Joint Response to my Questions dated 12 January 2023.

Policy 3: Strategic Development Delivery (page 27)

- 4.19 The proximity of the strategic development sites to the settlements of Great and Little Stukeley could pose a threat to the achievement of the vision and the objectives as set out on page 14 of the Plan. Therefore, it is important that the aspirations of the existing community are properly addressed when considering development at the strategic level. To that end, policy 3 seeks to ensure that a collaborative approach is adopted and that the relationship between the Parish and the 'new' development is sustainable. Biodiversity enhancement, maximised accessibility, appropriate integration of communities, a high standard of design, and the delivery of infrastructure, are some of the concerns of the existing community that should be addressed in the consideration of strategic development.
- 4.20 However, policy 3 is comparatively long, repeats Local Plan policies and lacks sufficient clarity. Consequently, the Parish Council has suggested a revised form of wording¹⁶ which I agree largely overcomes the concerns of the District Council. Indeed, Huntingdonshire District Council has confirmed that it is in agreement with the Parish Council on the revised wording¹⁷ and that the modifications do not change the fundamental intent of the TSNP. I therefore recommend that the wording of policy 3 be modified accordingly (**PM10**).
- 4.21 With regard to Alconbury Weald, concern was raised in a consultation response¹⁸ that there is no reference to sustainable transport initiatives, including a new railway station to serve the community. As far as I am aware, there is no firm commitment to such provision or any associated timetable for implementation and therefore it would be premature to include them as a proposal in this document.

Policy 4 Community engagement (page 29)

- 4.22 Policy 4 appropriately confirms that community engagement should be undertaken early on in the planning process and that development proposals should be accompanied by a Statement of Community involvement.

Policy 5 Community assets (page 32)

- 4.23 Support is given, in policy 5, to the provision of appropriate new community assets and the protection of existing assets. There is a risk that the term 'community assets' could be confused with the term 'Assets of Community Value' and therefore I agree with the District Council that the term 'community facilities' should be used throughout the Plan,

¹⁶ See joint response to my Questions dated 12 January 2023.

¹⁷ See joint response to my Questions dated 12 January 2023.

¹⁸ See Representation STNP:1.

including in relation to the rugby club at Huntingdon Racecourse.¹⁹ I recommend accordingly (**PM11**). It has also been agreed between the two Councils²⁰ that the community facilities for RAF Alconbury should be removed from Map 5b because, if RAF Alconbury were to be redeveloped, it is unlikely that the wholesale retention of these facilities would be viable or meet the needs of the new community. I agree that this modification is necessary and therefore recommend **PM12**.

- 4.24 Concern was expressed regarding the expectation that the rugby club will continue to use the racecourse as its location in perpetuity.²¹ Firstly, the policy will only apply until the end of the Plan period in 2036 (or earlier if a review is undertaken) and, secondly, the fourth paragraph of the policy makes it clear that there may be circumstances where the loss of a community facility may be justified.
- 4.25 Anglian Water Services Ltd (Representation STNP:6) expresses concern that the area identified on Map 5c (page 35) includes Anglia Water assets. However, in response to my Question 16 to the Parish Council, it is confirmed that the pumping station is outside the dashed red line (I have suggested, in paragraph 4.36 below, that consideration be given to improving the legibility of the plans within the document).

Conclusions on Sustainable Growth (Policies 1 to 5)

- 4.26 I am satisfied that, as modified, the TSNP policies 1 to 5, will contribute to the achievement of sustainable growth and meet all the other Basic Conditions.

Natural and Built Environment – Policies 6 to 8 (page 37)

Policy 6 Local Green Space (page 44)

- 4.27 I have read the Local Green Space Evidence document (September 2022) which clearly sets out the approach taken by the Parish Council towards green space designation. Local Green Space is designated at four sites in the Parish. Having seen the sites, I agree that they all meet the necessary criteria set out principally in NPPF paragraph 102 (and 101). The District Council voiced concern regarding paragraph 29.3 which relates to sites that are not designated local green space. I agree that the location of this paragraph in the text could cause confusion and therefore agree with the two Councils that it should be moved to the start of the section, to become paragraph 29.1 (**PM13**).
- 4.28 I am advised that all the owners of the proposed Local Green Space have been made aware of the designation and that no objections have been

¹⁹ See Representation STNP:53.

²⁰ See joint response to my Questions dated 12 January 2023.

²¹ Representation STNP:20.

received, having due regard to the advice in the PPG.²² It was suggested²³ that the land north of Stukeley Park should be included in the LGS but I have seen no conclusive evidence that this land would meet the requirements for designation as LGS.

Policy 7 Green Infrastructure in Alconbury Weald (page 48)

- 4.29 Policy 7 supports the improvement of existing green infrastructure and the retention of these features, unless adequate replacement provision is made elsewhere. In the interests of clarity, the word 'existing' should be deleted from the first sentence of the policy. Similarly, the second paragraph of the policy should be modified as set out in **PM14**.

Policy 8: Protected Settlement Breaks (page 50)

- 4.30 A number of areas are identified on Map 9a as 'settlement breaks'. I understand the concern of the Parish Council that there is a risk that, in a locality where there is significant development proposed, some form of coalescence may occur, and I have read (and accept) the explanation given regarding Protected Settlement Breaks as set out in the Settlement Boundary Methodology (September 2022). However, I note that both Councils agree²⁴ that revised wording of the policy is required to ensure effective implementation and I agree that such a modification would enable decision makers to interpret the requirements more easily. Therefore, I recommend **PM15**.
- 4.31 I note that one consultation respondent²⁵ considers that there are already sufficient measures in place to protect the open countryside and that the policy is superfluous. I disagree, because the policy only relates to settlement breaks and so is focussed on a specific function of the land. I also note that there is no objection to the policy (as modified) from HDC.

Conclusions on Natural and Built Environment (Policies 6 to 8)

- 4.32 The Parish Council has placed appropriate emphasis on protecting and enhancing the natural and built environments and I am satisfied that the approach taken is in general conformity with the strategic policies and meets the other Basic Conditions.

Implementation and Delivery (page 53)

- 4.33 This section identifies the delivery partners and the implementation methods. It also sets out the priorities for the spending the neighbourhood portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy. A

²² PPG section Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space (see Reference ID: 37-019-20140306).

²³ Representation STNP:22.

²⁴ See joint response to my Questions dated 12 January 2023.

²⁵ Representation STNP:11.

modification to the text is required in order to provide necessary clarity, and this is set out in **PM16**. In this way, the vision and objectives of the Parish Council will be achieved.

Monitoring and Review

4.34 Monitoring is an important component in the plan making process, and it is acknowledged on page 55, that the TSNP may require some amendments before 2036. This section of the TSNP provides a valuable summary of the approach to be adopted should changes to the document be required.

The Glossary

4.35 Although there is no requirement to include a Glossary, I consider it to be of significant value to decision makers. I consider that changes to the Glossary could be undertaken as 'factual amendments' (see paragraph 4.36 below). I note that concern is raised regarding the definition of 'economic development'²⁶ and my advice would be to reflect the use class order as it is at the time the Plan is made.

Factual and Minor Amendments

4.36 Minor amendments to the text can be made consequential to the recommended modifications, alongside any other minor non-material changes, updates or corrections in agreement between the Parish Council and Huntingdonshire District Council. (PPG Reference ID: 41-106-20190509). A number of minor amendments have been suggested by respondents (e.g. Representations STNP:56 and STNP:57) and these can be addressed by the Parish Council as is appropriate. I would also suggest (in the interests of clarity) that consideration be given to improving the legibility of a number of maps, including Map 2 (page 13), Map 5c (page 35) and the untitled Map at the top of page 33. The map identifying the Neighbourhood Area Designations (page 10) should be up-dated.

Other Matters

4.37 The content of a neighbourhood plan is largely at the discretion of the qualifying body, subject to being informed by the consultation process and the requirements set by the Basic Conditions.

4.38 Concerns were raised regarding the lack of a policy in relation to the needs of equestrians²⁷, but I am satisfied that the matter is adequately addressed in Local Plan policies LP4 (contributing to Infrastructure Delivery – including recreation) and LP16 (sustainable travel).

²⁶ Representation STNP:48.

²⁷ For example, Representation STNP:59.

- 4.39 Similarly I am satisfied that Local Plan policies appropriately address issues of design, appearance and place-making and that therefore these issues do not need to be fully addressed in the TSNP.
- 4.40 I note that both Councils agree that there is no need for the TSNP to include policies on rural exception housing or first homes. I have seen no evidence that would lead me to challenge the conclusions of the Councils on these matters.²⁸

5. Conclusions

Summary

- 5.1 The Stukeleys Neighbourhood Plan has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements. My examination has investigated whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for neighbourhood plans. I have had regard for all the responses made following consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, and the evidence documents submitted with it.
- 5.2 I have made recommendations to modify a number of policies and text to ensure the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum.

The Referendum and its Area

- 5.3 I have considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates.
- 5.4 The Stukeleys Neighbourhood Plan as modified has no policy or proposals which I consider significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary, requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond the Plan boundary. I recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Overview

- 5.5 The Stukeleys is a Parish with diverse characteristics and with significant pressures caused, in part, by the strategic role of Huntingdon in accommodating growth. However, despite those pressures the Parish has retained undeveloped areas and parts of the locality are almost rural in character.
- 5.6 The Parish Council has produced a comprehensive, well-structured document which will contribute towards ensuring that each of the settlements within the Parish retains their independent character. It is a

²⁸ See response to my Questions 7 and 8 to the Parish Council.

document which appears to have the support of many local residents and, if made, the Plan will provide an important component in the Development Plan. The Plan will ensure that the characteristics of the natural and built environments that are important to local residents will be retained and enhanced, that their quality of life will be improved, and that new growth will be sustainable.

David Hogger

Examiner

Appendix: Modifications (16)

Notes:

- Page references are to those in the submitted draft The Stukeleys Neighbourhood Plan.
- Additions are shown in bold and deletions with ~~strikethrough~~.
- In the interests of brevity, where whole paragraphs or sections have been deleted, the modification refers to the deletion of all the text.

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
PM1	Page 18 Footnotes 12 and 13	Delete <u>all</u> of footnote 12 and replace it with: See strategic policy SEL 1.1 Former Alconbury Airfield and Grange Farm as set out in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. Delete <u>all</u> of footnote 13 and replace it with: See strategic policy SEL 1.2 RAF Alconbury as set out in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
PM2	Page 19 Paragraph 17.3	Modify the first sentence of paragraph 17.3 to read: The promoters of Alconbury Weald (SEL 1.1) are suggesting three key phases for the strategic allocation Three phases of the overall Alconbury Weald allocation have currently been approved or are pending determination, as follows: Modify second sentence of bullet point 2 in paragraph 17.3 to read: Alongside key phase 2 but not technically part of that key phase is a separate outline planning application on the Grange Farm area of the development. This includes land for 1,500 homes, a community centre and sports facilities. and a Permission for the provision of a primary school has

		been granted. on the Grange Farm area of the development.
PM3	Page 20 Para 18.3	In fourth line of paragraph 18.3 replace housing with mixed use . Delete the last sentence of paragraph 18.3: These will deliver market and affordable housing.
PM4	Page 20 Paragraph 18.5	Delete all of paragraph 18.5: The Local Plan does not propose any allocated sites in the villages of Great Stukeley or Little Stukeley.
PM5	Page 21 Paragraph 19.3	Delete the last sentence of paragraph 19.3: Proposals which involve high quality architecture and include the latest environmentally friendly technology will be supported.
PM6	Page 22 Paragraph 19.6	Modify paragraph 19.6 to read: No settlement boundary is being defined in this Plan for the strategic expansion locations SEL.1 (Former Alconbury Airfield and Grange Farm now commonly referred to as Alconbury Weald), or SEL 1.2 (RAF Alconbury) or HU1 (Ermine Street, Huntingdon) as the Huntingdonshire Local Plan already defines a clear boundary for these allocations . two combined strategic expansion locations. The Local Plan also defines a clear boundary for the allocated site HU 1 (Ermine Street Huntingdon). This allows for the effective delivery of strategic expansion locations and mixed use allocations taking into account Although the local plan defines an area for each of these three strategic locations, the ability to accommodate the dynamic nature of proposals, particularly in the strategic expansion locations is an important feature. This is why these areas are explicitly referred to in policy 1 as being excluded from the area designated as countryside

PM7	Page 22 Policy 1	<p>Modify first sentence of the second paragraph of the policy to read:</p> <p>Within the settlement boundary of Great Stukeley and Little Stukeley, proposals will be supported where development would not adversely affect the established character and appearance of the existing settlement; would not harm the undeveloped nature of the surrounding rural areas; and would respect the landscape setting of the respective village. Factors to be considered will include how the proposal reflects Planning applications will be expected to demonstrate how they have taken into account the existing built form, layout and structure of the surrounding area; the contribution of spaces between buildings; and the design and visual appearance of nearby buildings in the surrounding area.</p> <p>Delete <u>all</u> of the third paragraph in the policy and replace it with:</p> <p>Land outside or not well related to the settlement boundary should be determined in accordance with the relevant Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies.</p>
PM8	Page 23 Map 3a Settlement Boundary	<p>Modify the settlement boundary, as shown on Map 3a, to include all the land within the curtilage of The Three Horseshoes within the settlement boundary (as identified on the Regulation 16 response from the Caldecott Group dated 23 November 2022).</p>
PM9	Page 25 Policy 2	<p>Modify Policy 2 to read:</p> <p><u>Site A – The Three Horseshoes</u></p> <p>Proposals for mixed-use development, including an element of residential or small-scale employment development on the Three Horseshoes Site in Great Stukeley shown as A on Map 4 will be supported where they facilitate retention of the existing public house as <u>an ongoing</u> community facility and lead to</p>

		<p>enhancement of the overall site and quality of built form and enhance the biodiversity value of the existing pond.</p> <p>Alternatively, proposals which address the comprehensive redevelopment of the entire site for mixed use will be supported where this can be demonstrated to result in a significant environmental enhancement; enhances the biodiversity value of the existing pond; and includes an ongoing role for the site in the provision of some form of community facility.</p> <p>Any proposal for development should ensure that some car parking is available for use in connection with the adjacent Great Stukeley Recreation Field. Proposals for mixed-use development, including an element of residential development that result in the complete loss of the public house will only be supported where the mix of uses includes some form of replacement community facility. Such a proposal would need to demonstrate that the environmental enhancement; biodiversity gain; and replacement community facility cumulatively outweigh the loss of the public house.</p> <p>As the site is already used informally for parking by users of the Great Stukeley Recreation Field, any proposal for development should ensure that some continued car parking is available for ongoing use in connection with the public use of the adjacent Great Stukeley Recreation Field.</p> <p><u>Site B – The Former Three Horseshoes Farm</u></p> <p>Proposals for the redevelopment, including residential development on the former Three Horseshoes Farm Site in Great Stukeley shown as B on Map 4 will be supported where they can deliver a framework that addresses the comprehensive redevelopment of the entire site that results in a significant</p>
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		<p>environmental enhancement to the gateway into the village and includes landscaping that enhances the biodiversity value of the site.</p> <p>Any proposal for development should explore the opportunity to expand the car parking provision available for use in connection with the adjacent Stukeley Country Hotel. Any proposal that would provide the opportunity for the delivery of serviced plots for self-build or custom housing for people with a local connection to Great Stukeley or Little Stukeley on this site would be particularly supported.</p> <p>As the adjacent Stukeley Country Hotel has limited car parking provision and the siting adjacent to the road junction makes on-street car parking difficult; any proposal for development that could deliver the opportunity to expand the existing car parking provision available for use in connection with the adjacent Stukeley Country Hotel would be particularly supported.</p>
PM10	Page 27 Policy 3	<p>Modify Policy 3 to read:</p> <p>Policy 3 – Strategic Development Delivery</p> <p>The Stukeleys Parish Council will in collaboration with Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and developers seek to develop an integrated overall network of communities across the Parish. This will include securing improvements to the sustainable transport linkages for walking and cycling between Alconbury Weald and the two villages of Great Stukeley and Little Stukeley to allow residents of the villages to better access the new services and facilities in Alconbury Weald.</p> <p>In all proposals on the strategic development sites at Alconbury Weald (SEL 1.1), RAF Alconbury (SEL 1.2) or Ermine Street, Huntingdon (HU 1) opportunities for</p>

		<p>green corridors that provide biodiversity enhancement across the plan area both within the strategic development sites and in adjacent areas, such as in the protected settlement breaks will be supported.</p> <p><u>Alconbury Weald (SEL 1.1)</u></p> <p>The Stukeleys Parish Council, with in collaboration with Huntingdonshire District Council; the master developer²⁹; and developers of individual parts, will seek to ensure that Alconbury Weald delivers sustainable strategic growth without resulting in coalescence with Great Stukeley and Little Stukeley, which creates a balanced and mixed new community which delivers the key aspirations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure the proposed country park as part of the overall green infrastructure network, including how this will relate to the Owl End and Green End parts of Great Stukeley; including consideration as to how an ecological corridor through to Stukeley Park in Great Stukeley might be achievable; • Prevent the coalescence with Great Stukeley and Little Stukeley, including through the delivery of the country park to protect the existing character of the villages of Great and Little Stukeley as distinct villages; and • Ensure that heritage assets and their settings including the Little Stukeley Conservation Area and the Prestley Wood Scheduled Monument are suitably preserved and enhanced. <p>Proposals for each key phase or additional part of Alconbury Weald should illustrate how it will integrate into existing consents</p>
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²⁹ A master developer is usually responsible for delivering the overall comprehensive scheme through the provision of infrastructure and services & facilities, with other developers and housebuilders then being appointed to deliver individual parcels. The master developer for SEL 1.1 Alconbury Weald is currently Urban & Civic. There is no master developer at this point for SEL 1.2 RAF Alconbury or HU1.

		<p>and how it relates to an overall masterplan for the whole allocation SEL 1.1. In particular proposals should illustrate the following aspects:</p> <p>Accessibility and Linkages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How proposals will maximise accessibility, including by sustainable transport modes, to green infrastructure and community facilities for the proposed additional community and the existing communities at Alconbury Weald and the villages of Little Stukeley and Great Stukeley; • How a network of footpath and cycle routes can be integrated around the site and how links into Great and Little Stukeley and wider afield, can be achieved to promote the use of non-vehicle modes of transport for short journeys; • Accessibility to existing public transport (bus) provision and how opportunities to develop additional public transport (bus) provision can be incorporated to promote the use of non-vehicle modes of transport; • How integration including appropriate linkages can be future proofed to retain the flexibility for the RAF Alconbury site (SEL 1.2) to come forward in the future and be developed by providing accessibility to both Great and Little Stukeley and Alconbury Weald; <p>Green Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the proposed country park will be delivered and how it will relate to the Owl End and Green End parts of Great Stukeley; how new green infrastructure, open space, ecological corridors and structural landscaping can both contribute to amenity and result in biodiversity net gain; <p>Infrastructure and Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How phasing will be secured and delivered including how site preparation work, demolition of the existing runway, any necessary site
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		<p>investigations and contamination remediation, and infrastructure provision are to be programmed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provision of on-site community facilities and how these meet the needs of future residents; ● Impact assessment on off-site infrastructure, services and facilities including the need for additional capacity; ● Sustainable drainage and measures to promote water re-use; <p>Relationship to Existing Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The relationship to existing development including proposals to ensure the protection of the living conditions of existing residents; how the existing character of the villages of Great and Little Stukeley areas will be retained as distinct settlements by use of appropriate spatial separation; and how surrounding uses including those on the retained part of RAF Alconbury will not be adversely affected; ● Incorporation of suitable measures to ensure the protection of the living conditions of future occupiers from existing and proposed employment development in order to safeguard existing and proposed employment from potential sterilisation arising from nearby residential development; <p>Design and Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposals to ensure a well-designed quality residential environment as envisaged in Policy LP 12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 as part of a continued high-quality new sustainable community; and ● How heritage assets and their settings including the Little Stukeley Conservation Area and the Prestley Wood Scheduled Monument are suitably preserved and enhanced. <p><u>RAF Alconbury (SEL 1.2)</u></p>
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		<p>The Stukeleys Parish Council will in collaboration with Huntingdonshire District Council, the Ministry of Defence, any master developer or site promoter ensure that the redevelopment of RAF Alconbury delivers sustainable strategic growth which creates a balanced and mixed new community without resulting in coalescence with Great Stukeley and Little Stukeley. Redevelopment proposals for RAF Alconbury should seek to enhance the character and appearance of the Little Stukeley Conservation Area through removal of large scale utilitarian buildings in the area to the immediate north-east of Little Stukeley. which delivers the key aspirations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maximise accessibility and linkages, including by sustainable transport modes, to green infrastructure and community facilities for the proposed additional community and the existing communities at Alconbury Weald and the villages of Little Stukeley and Great Stukeley; • Prevent the coalescence with Great Stukeley and Little Stukeley to protect the existing character of the villages of Great and Little Stukeley as distinct villages; and • Ensure that heritage assets and their settings including the Little Stukeley Conservation Area are suitably preserved and enhanced including through removal of the large-scale utilitarian buildings in the area to the immediate north-east of Little Stukeley. <p>Proposals for RAF Alconbury should illustrate through an overall masterplan for the whole allocation SEL 1.2 how the proposals would deliver the following aspects:</p> <p>Accessibility and Linkages</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How proposals will maximise accessibility, including by sustainable transport modes, to green infrastructure and community facilities for the proposed additional community and the existing communities at Alconbury Weald and the villages of Little Stukeley and Great Stukeley; • How a network of footpath and cycle routes can be integrated around the site and how links into Alconbury Weald and Great and Little Stukeley and wider afield, can be achieved to promote the use of non-vehicle modes of transport for short journeys; • Accessibility to existing public transport (bus) provision and how opportunities to develop additional public transport (bus) provision can be incorporated to promote the use of non-vehicle modes of transport; <p>Green Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How new green infrastructure, open space, ecological corridors and structural landscaping can both contribute to amenity and result in biodiversity net gain; <p>Infrastructure and Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How phasing will be secured and delivered including how site preparation work, demolition of any existing buildings, any necessary site investigations and contamination remediation, and infrastructure provision are to be programmed; • Which existing on-site community facilities can be retained and repurposed for ongoing community use, as part of an overall network of community facilities across Alconbury Weald and Great and Little Stukeley; • Impact assessment on off-site infrastructure, services and facilities including the need for additional capacity;
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable drainage and measures to promote water re-use; <p>Relationship to Existing Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship to existing development including proposals to ensure the protection of the living conditions of existing residents; how the existing character of the villages of Great and Little Stukeley areas will be retained as distinct settlements by use of appropriate spatial separation; and how the spatial separation between Little Stukeley and new development can be improved; • Incorporation of suitable measures to ensure the protection of the living conditions of existing occupiers of Little Stukeley from any proposed reuse of the existing large buildings close to Little Stukeley; <p>Design and Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals to ensure a well-designed quality residential environment as envisaged in Policy LP 12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 as part of a continued high-quality new sustainable community; and • How heritage assets and their settings including the Little Stukeley Conservation Area are suitably preserved and enhanced. <p><u>Ermine Street, Huntingdon (HU 1)</u></p> <p>The Stukeleys Parish Council will in collaboration with Huntingdonshire District Council and the developer ensure that the eastern part of the urban extension of Huntingdon within the plan area delivers sustainable strategic growth which creates a balanced and mixed new community without resulting in coalescence with Great Stukeley. which delivers the key aspiration to:</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent the coalescence with Great Stukeley to protect the existing character of the village of Great Stukeley as a distinct village and the rural character of the Green End part of Great Stukeley.
PM11	Page 30 Chapter 22 and Policy 5 (page 32) on Community Assets	Use the term Community Facilities throughout the document in place of Community Assets .
PM12	Page 34 Map 5b	Delete from the Map the community facilities for RAF Alconbury.
PM13	Page 44 Paragraph 29.3	Relocate all of paragraph 29.3 to the start of Section 29 so that it becomes paragraph 29.1 (renumber other paragraphs accordingly).
PM14	Page 48 Policy 7	<p>Delete the word existing in the first line of the policy.</p> <p>Modify the end of the policy to read:</p> <p>..... unless it can be shown that adequate replacement provision is made elsewhere in Alconbury Weald which performs an equivalent role and is located where it is equally or more accessible to the existing and planned new community it is intended to serve.:</p> <p>a) it is in compliance with policy SEL 1.1 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, permitted schemes and masterplan; and</p> <p>b) adequate replacement provision can be made elsewhere in Alconbury Weald which performs an equivalent role; and</p> <p>c) it is located where it is equally or more accessible to the existing and</p>

		planned new community it is intended to serve.
PM15	Page 50 Policy 8	<p>Delete <u>all</u> of the policy and replace it with:</p> <p>The areas shown on Maps 9a and 9b are identified as protected settlement breaks. The protected settlement breaks have the following purposes:</p> <p>a) to prevent the coalescence of the planned development at Huntingdon, RAF Alconbury and Alconbury Weald with the existing settlements of Great Stukeley and Little Stukeley;</p> <p>b) to maintain the distinctive identity of Great Stukeley and Little Stukeley as separate village settlements and maintain their traditional built form character of the 'Ends'; and</p> <p>c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.</p> <p>Protected settlement breaks are identified for their verdant and undeveloped nature that gives them openness. It is the freedom from built form that gives them their spatial openness.</p> <p>Proposals for built development within the settlement breaks will not be supported where this would individually or cumulatively lead to a reduction in the openness between the settlements or harm the purposes set out above.</p> <p>Proposals to use the protected settlement breaks for green infrastructure, biodiversity net gain or tree planting will be supported where this does not conflict with the purposes of being a protected settlement break.</p>

PM16	Page 53 Paragraph 31.7	Delete <u>all</u> of first sentence in paragraph 31.7 and replace it with: Some new development taking place in the Parish will be liable for CIL contributions. Contributions through CIL will be obtained from any housing development taking place in the Parish.
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