

## **A VERY WORRYING DEVELOPMENT FOR THE RURAL AREAS**

On Monday 5 March a decision was issued by the Planning Inspectorate allowing an appeal to build 141 homes at Long Street, Hanslope. The appeal was brought by Mr & Mrs John Wakefield Adams against refusal for development by MK Council and heard last November and December.

Although this is outside of our Parish, the ramifications could have a devastating effect on all the rural areas within the Borough of Milton Keynes. This is because the Inspector ruled that MK Council did not have a valid Five Year Housing Land Supply (more commonly known as the Five Year Plan) under the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Without this, the MK Local Plan for the supply of housing will be considered out-of-date and planning permission should be granted unless adverse effects outweigh benefits (for example, unsustainable traffic congestion). In short, it could allow speculative developers to override the Local Plan and to build anywhere, including in the open countryside. Perversely, the fact that Milton Keynes has given planning approval for about 20,000 homes **which have yet to be built because builders will not build them** is not taken into consideration when calculating the Five Year Plan.

The Inspector's report has sent shock waves through MK Council and Hanslope Parish Council causing each body – independently - to seek legal advice on instituting a Judicial Review [JR] of the report's opinion. At the time of writing we do not know what this advice will recommend. If the decision is made to pursue the JR it will need the approval of a judge in the Administrative Court (part of the High Court) before it can proceed to a full hearing which would likely be six to nine months later. The application to the Administrative Court must be made by the 16 April, that is within six weeks after the date of the Inspector's report. Leave to proceed to a full hearing – **if granted** – should be known within a few weeks thereafter.

In addition, it is hoped that we will be able to enlist the valuable support of our two MPs – Mark Lancaster for MK North and Iain Stewart for MK South. Iain was appointed the Government's "official champion" following the publication of the National Infrastructure Commission's report on the Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge corridor in late 2017. As a result, it is understood he has good connections to Sajid Javid, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government which oversees the Planning Inspectorate.

Milton Keynes is meant to be a carefully planned new town yet the Inspector's opinion drives a coach and horses through this laudable and common sense aspiration. Our vibrant and fast growing metropolis will be subject to the unsympathetic whim of developers forcing us to live with the undesirable results for generations.

### **Note:**

One means of protection against speculative development is to have a Neighborhood Plan. Preparation to put this in place by Haversham-cum-Little Linford Parish Council is currently underway and the first public consultation was held at Haversham school on the evening of Wednesday 14 March. However, it is likely that the plan will not be finalized and approved by MK Council for at least another year so we remained exposed until then.

## **OTHER CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

### **Rejection of appeal by Templeview Developments Ltd to build up to 250 homes at Linford Lakes**

We heard on the morning of Wednesday 28 March that the appeal had been rejected by the Planning Inspector, John Felgate. The appeal was against the decision by MK Council's Development Control Committee in March 2017 to dismiss Templeview's application to build in an Area of Attractive Landscape. The Inspector stated, inter alia:-

*"The development would intrude into the countryside, and into a designated AAL and Wildlife Corridor. It would cause substantial and irreversible harm to the Ouse Valley's valued landscape. It would permanently destroy priority habitats, threaten important wildlife, and weaken ecological networks. It would also take 15 ha of land from the Linear Park, reducing the scope for informal and passive*

*recreation uses in the future .*

*Cumulatively, it seems to me that these adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits that have been identified. The scheme therefore does not benefit from the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development.*

It is worth noting that, although Mr Felgate stated that MK Council did not have a Five Year Housing Land Supply (see above), the disadvantages of such a development clearly outweighed the benefits.

This means that where a development is likely to cause adverse effects such as serious traffic congestion it should be rejected irrespective of whether or not there is a Five-Year Plan in place. A presumption in favour of sustainable development does not make a site sustainable if it is obviously not.

We owe much to Tony Bedford who as chair of the Friends of the Linford Lakes Nature Reserve vigorously opposed the plan. Tony attended every day of the Appeal hearing and was able to present a highly informed and articulate case against the development and the concomitant devastation to the local ecology.

#### **Planning application for 377 homes to the west of the M1 off Little Linford Lane in Little Linford**

There seems to be no further news on this application. A handful of new documents has appeared on the MK Planning Portal including one opposing the application as the site is of archaeological heritage.

I last spoke to the MK Planning case officer, Nicola Thompson, in early February who was then awaiting a revised traffic report from the applicant, Grand Union Housing. However, no such report appears on the Portal. Nicola thought it unlikely the application would be heard by the Development Control Committee until April or later.

We await developments.

#### **Planning application by REL Group Ltd to build two houses behind The Greyhound pub**

REL Group Ltd owns the Greyhound and submitted the application in October. It remains outstanding and the agent for the applicant submitted a Technical Note on parking earlier in March. There is concern by local residents that the development will reduce the parking spaces for customers and force patrons to have to reverse into Haversham High Street when leaving (which is illegal). It will also remove the area at the rear of the pub used in the summer for customers to sit outside and for functions such as pig roasts.

The car parking does not comply with MK Parking Standards and further investigation is currently underway.

**Patrick Upton**  
**Little Linford**