



# Neighbourhood Plan

2020 - 2030



**JUNE 2020**

**Pre-submission (Regulation 14) Version**

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Astwood & Hardmead Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to provide a planning vision for the Parish over the next 10 years to 2030.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to be in general conformity with Plan:MK, the 2019 Local Plan adopted by Milton Keynes Council, and be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework. The Neighbourhood Plan will be used to determine planning applications in the Astwood & Hardmead Parish. The plan covers the entirety of the Parish, as follows:

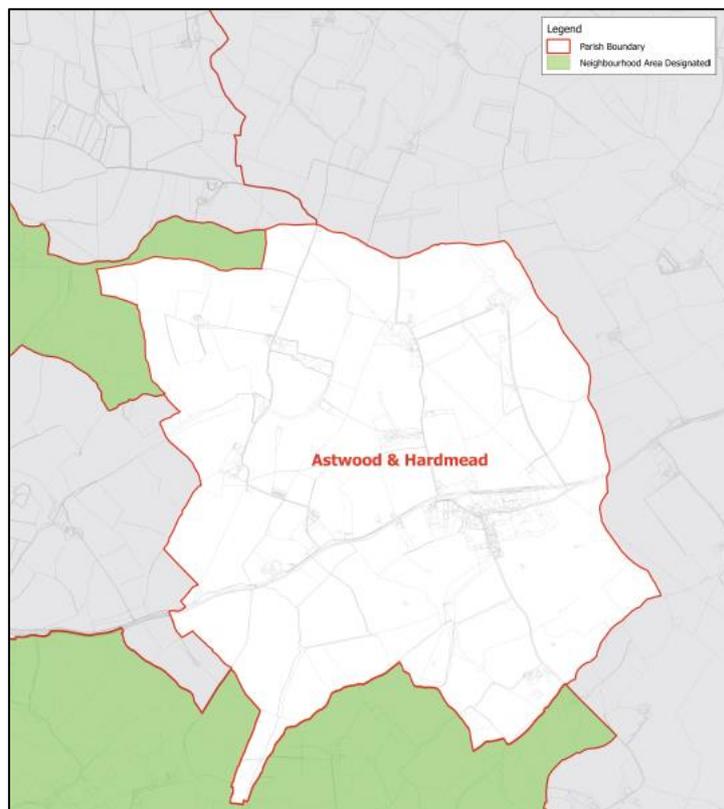


Figure 1: Designated Neighbourhood Plan area

- 1.3 The plan began in 2019 with the Parish Council creating a steering group to lead development of the Neighbourhood Plan. Throughout the process engagement with the local community has been undertaken through questionnaires, events, and online polls. Full details of the background to the Neighbourhood Plan can be viewed in the accompanying supporting documents:

- Consultation Statement;
- Basic Conditions Statement;

- Site Assessment document.

1.4 Each of the following chapters explains why and how particular issues are important to the Parish and specifies the relevant planning policy that will be applied to applications. Policies are distinguishable by their specific number and being contained in text boxes.

## 2 Housing

- 2.1 Astwood & Hardmead is a small rural parish and as such is not expected to deliver any allocated growth in Plan:MK. Nevertheless, in line with the views of local residents (see consultation statement), the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to deliver a small amount of housing growth in the Parish.
- 2.2 Existing housing in the Parish is predominantly located in Astwood, with Hardmead and other isolated properties washed over by 'open countryside' in Plan:MK. Astwood has a defined settlement boundary in Plan:MK as per Figure 2 below. As such, housing sites were sought that are adjacent to the settlement boundary so as to be as consistent as possible with the existing village:



Figure 2: Existing Astwood settlement boundary, as defined by Plan:MK

- 2.3 The accompanying site assessment document explains how development options were each assessed and a preferred option for 1-2 dwellings identified. This site is allocated for development in the Neighbourhood Plan, with other windfall sites coming forward over the plan period within the settlement boundary or through other changes-of-use (e.g. through permitted development rights).

### **Policy H1: Housing**

The Astwood & Hardmead Neighbourhood Plan will provide for up to two new homes over the plan period 2020-2030.

Other new housing will be supported on windfall sites<sup>1</sup> that lie within the Settlement Boundary of Astwood in accordance with other policies of the Development Plan, existing permissions, and other sites that may come forward under Permitted Development.

The following site is allocated for housing in accordance with the specific criteria in Policy H2:

- Land to the north-west of former St. Peter's Church.

<sup>1</sup> Windfall sites are defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) as 'Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.'

### **Policy H2: Allocated site**

The land to the north-west of the former St. Peter's Church is allocated for one or two dwellings as per the Neighbourhood Plan Proposals Map. Planning permission will be granted where the following criteria are all met:

- 1 Development should be of a scale and form that respects the setting of the listed former church building. This should be achieved through the use of single-storey elements to preserve glimpses of the church and appropriate landscaping.
- 2 Dwellings should be constructed from sensitive materials (e.g. stone or local brick) that provides a high-quality development at the western entrance to Astwood.
- 3 Appropriate off-street parking and domestic curtilage should be achieved, particularly should two semi-detached dwellings be proposed.
- 4 Permission will be granted subject to a condition removing permitted development rights, so as to ensure the setting of the listed building continues to be preserved.

## 3 Economy & Environment

- 3.1 Employment facilities in Astwood & Hardmead are limited with Manor Farm Business Park in Astwood being the only small-scale collection of business premises in the Parish. Other businesses are restricted to farms and other small units.
- 3.2 The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to directly address the fact that most residents will out-commute from the Parish for work but nevertheless does support sustainable rural growth in line with Paragraph 83 of the NPPF and Plan:MK. In particular, the diversification of farm buildings in and around the Parish is directly supported by local residents, provided this can be achieved without any significant impact on the road network around the Parish, which other than the A422 is typically comprised of narrow country lanes that are unsuitable for any increase in traffic.

### **Policy E1: Commercial development**

Commercial development in Astwood & Hardmead including farm diversification will only be supported where it can be demonstrated there will not be a significant increase in vehicle movements associated with the proposals. Particular consideration should be given to the ability of rural roads in the parish to accommodate larger vehicles, and the need to avoid conflicts with cyclists, horse riders, and other users.

- 3.3 The wide and open nature of much of the countryside around the Parish might naturally lend itself to large-scale renewable energy projects at some point in the future. Whilst supporting the need to encourage green and renewable energy initiatives, the Neighbourhood Plan only wishes to see these come forward in areas that will have minimal impact upon the landscape and visual amenity of residents and visitors to the Parish.

### **Policy E2: Renewable energy**

Proposals for renewable energy projects will be supported where it can be demonstrated there will be no adverse impacts on the amenity of homes within the parish. Applications should be supported by a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to confirm that wider landscape impacts are also appropriately mitigated.

## 4 Design

- 4.1 Neither Astwood nor Hardmead have a Conservation Area or similar that influences the look and form of new development. However, the Parish still retains an historic form and appearance that should be respected in all new development that comes forward.
- 4.2 There are a variety of house-types and styles prevalent in the Parish and as such the Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to unduly restrict how new development should look. It is nevertheless considered appropriate that a policy be included that seeks to retain a degree of consistency with the existing village, particularly in the immediate vicinity of the development.

### **Policy D1: Design**

The design of new development should be appropriate for its location and respectful of the existing character of Astwood & Hardmead by using traditional materials where possible. Proposals that actively seek to diversify the character of Astwood & Hardmead should be accompanied by a proportionate community engagement exercise, demonstrating support from local residents.

## 5 Landscape

- 5.1 The landscape around the Parish is inherently rural in nature and, as such, is protected for its intrinsic beauty under both the NPPF and Policy DS5 of Plan:MK. There are nevertheless specific areas that warrant additional protection according to local residents. These include areas within the built-up parts of the village that are particularly special as areas of open green space, and rights of way that afford access to the wider countryside for the enjoyment of all.
- 5.2 The suitability of each Local Green Space is given specific justification in the accompanying Basic Conditions Statement.

### **Policy L1: Local Green Space designation**

The following areas are designated as Local Green Spaces, within which inappropriate development will not be granted permission unless there are very special circumstances for doing so. Proposals to enhanced recreation and leisure will be supported:

- The Village Garden
- Play Areas in both Astwood and Hardmead

Each are shown on the accompanying policies map.

### **Policy L2: Rights of Way**

New development affecting a right of way should make provision for the right of way as part of the development or for its diversion on a convenient alternative route. Improvements to the standard of accessibility will be supported.

## 6 Community facilities

6.1 Astwood & Hardmead are fortunate to sustain both a pub and a village hall despite the relatively small population they serve. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect both of these assets and ensure that they are not lost to development in the future.

### **Policy C1: Loss of community facilities**

Proposals that would result in the loss of an existing community facility (for the purposes of this plan; the village hall and pub) should be supported by evidence to demonstrate that:

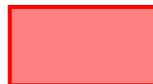
- a) Two years of marketing for the existing use has been undertaken with no realistic offer received; or
- b) Alternative premises have or will be provided.

# ASTWOOD & HARDMEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – POLICIES MAP

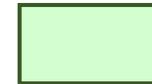


**Promap**v2  
LANDMARK INFORMATION

Cretmapping plc 2017.  
Plotted Scale - 1:3500. Paper Size - A4



Housing Allocation – Policy H2



Local Green Space – Policy L1



Settlement Boundary – Policy H1