

# Central Beds Local Plan: Response to additional documents

## by Harlington Parish Council

following Full PC meeting 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020

### Response to Document 117: Modifications

The Parish Council is not simply opposing any new developments in Harlington. Over recent years over 150 new homes have been approved in the village (over 10% increase).

The Parish Council requests the Inspector to apply modifications to the Local Plan before it is approved as the basis for future development of the area, the modifications to include the following:

- Deleting the proposed development at HAS20 and HAS21 and including a smaller allocation – a rural exception site at Harlington east of the railway,
- removing the RFI and warehousing at Sundon Quarry from the Local Plan as the justification for siting this in the Green Belt and the prospect of future expansion have not been assessed independently and so concerns raised have not been addressed. If the Inspectors are minded to agree the RFI at Sundon modifications should be added addressing road traffic movement, hours of operation, and minimising light and noise pollution, visual intrusion for nearby residents, and prevent pollution of the groundwater and this important aquifer.
- A maximum of 3,100 homes in the allocation north of Luton with enhanced landscaping measures to minimise the visual impacts of the development and a s.106 element that addresses the impact of the development on services and facilities in the villages,
- Use the Local Plan's Early Review mechanism to reassess housing needs, incorporate material changes, enable effective inter-authority agreement on meeting housing and other development needs, identifying a realistic target for new homes in the period beyond 2035 for the whole of Central Beds with a new Call For Sites and wide-ranging traffic impact study, to support housing and development strategies which conforms to the National Planning Policy Framework for development which minimises loss of green belt, impact on the AONB, environmental pollution and other impacts.

The Parish Council is making strong objections to a number of proposals in the Local Plan and the proposals in documents 113 and 115 for additional growth at Harlington because of major safety concerns, the impact on the green belt and the lack of facilities in the village. The allocations off Sundon Road Toddington Road and the permitted scheme at Station Road amount to 635 additional homes in the village – a 65 % increase, in a village with limited facilities.

The Council is also making strong objection to the loss of green belt from the development of the Rail Freight Interchange at Sundon (document 107) and Luton North (doc. 113) . It is increasingly likely that the Local Plan's estimated need for new housing is excessive, and the loss of green belt and impact on the AONB from these schemes and the new M1 / A6 link unjustified. If allowed the RFI would risk further loss of green belt with future expansion, especially with freight traffic drawn from the east and north (A1 / A421) via the A6, a scenario not assessed or tested.

The documents continue the mistaken classification of Harlington as a Large Village/Minor Service Centre (MSC) to justify new development. Villages like Toddington and Barton are MSCs with a high street, bakers, variety of venues – cafe's, take-aways and restaurant and a range of retail options plus a bank (in Barton) and both have libraries. Harlington has none of these services and facilities let alone the full-time large GP surgeries and regular bus services - the number of homes proposed in the Local Plan would mean Harlington would grow by two-thirds its current size, and introduce unsafe arrangements for school children.

The response by the Parish Council raises major concerns over the Sustainability Assessment and the Housing Technical Report, and concludes by suggesting Modifications which the Inspectors are requested to consider in order to deliver an adopted local plan for the area paying due regard to minimising the loss of green belt and AONB, and using the Early Review proposed by CBC to reassess housing needs to a more realistic level in light of the forecast economic downturn, with a fresh 'call-for-sites'.

The format for uploading consultation responses may involve duplication, unfortunately this is unavoidable in order to get over the objections in a comprehensive manner.