

SLAPTON PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2013-2033



FINAL PLAN

April 2018

Submitted by Slapton Parish Council under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42.

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A. FOREWORD

The Parish of Slapton lies within Aylesbury Vale District, in the County of Buckinghamshire. To ensure that continued growth and development is in line with parishioners' expectations, the Parish Council appointed a Steering Group of councillors and residents to investigate and prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood Plans offer a far greater opportunity to parishioners to participate in the shaping of their community.

Our parishioners have responded with both enthusiasm and interest and I would like to thank them for their encouragement and engagement. I would also like to thank all the people who have given hours of their time to researching, gathering, collating and distributing all the evidence received. The efforts of all who have participated are embodied in this Slapton Neighbourhood Development Plan, which is fit to shape our community until 2033.

Melinda Woof
Chair
Slapton Parish Council
November 2017

B. LIST OF POLICIES WITHIN THE SLAPTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1 Slapton Parish Council has prepared a Neighbourhood Plan for the area designated by the local planning authority, Aylesbury Vale District Council, under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Area was designated by the District Council for this purpose on 6 January 2015 and is shown in Plan A below.

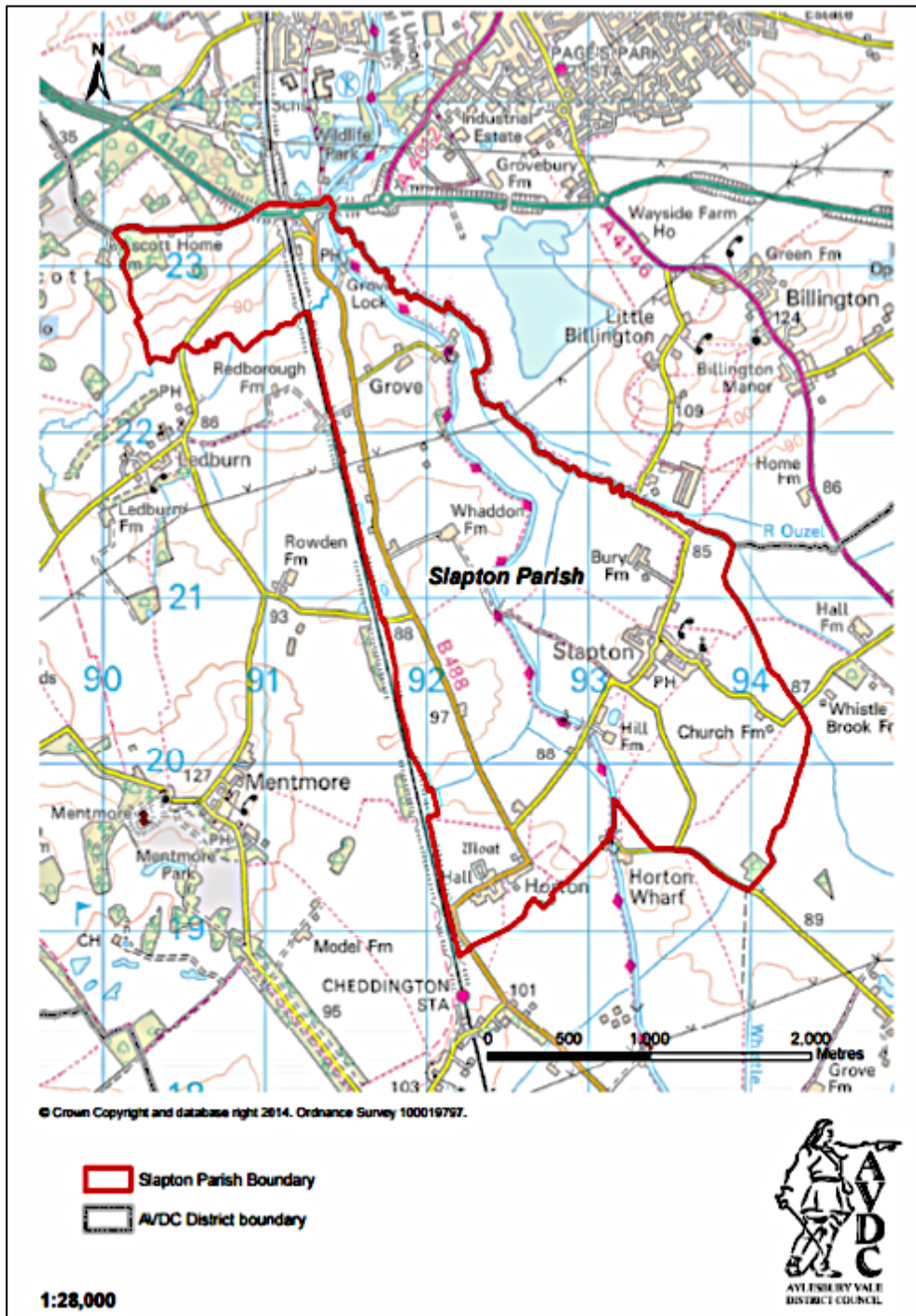


Fig 1: The designated Slapton Parish Neighbourhood Area

1.2 The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to identify potential land for development and make planning policies that can be used by the District Council in the determination of planning applications in the local area until March 2033. These policies are aimed at managing development in and around the village and across the wider Parish in the most sustainable way by protecting its rural character and encouraging proposals that will benefit the local community.

1.3 Neighbourhood Planning is an opportunity for Local Communities to shape the future development of their area and to facilitate locally appropriate sustainable development. If approved at a public referendum, the Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the statutory development plan for the local area and will carry significant weight when planning applications are decided. Neighbourhood Plans can therefore only contain land use planning policies that can be used for this purpose. This often means that there are other important issues of interest to the local community that cannot be addressed in a Neighbourhood Plan as they are not directly related to planning. In the case of Slapton, a number of such issues were identified which were referred back to the Parish Council to consider.

1.4 Although there is considerable scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, Neighbourhood plans MUST meet the following criteria:

- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
- Ensure that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- Ensure that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Development Plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area)
- Ensure that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.

1.5 In addition, the Parish Council must be able to show that it has properly consulted local people and other relevant organisations during the process of making its Neighbourhood Plan and has followed the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

1.6 These requirements will be tested by an Independent Examiner once the Neighbourhood Plan is finalised. If satisfied, the Examiner will recommend to the District Council that the plan goes to a public referendum of the local electorate. If a simple majority of the turnout votes for the Plan, then AVDC will formally 'make' the Plan which means that it becomes legally adopted into planning policy for the local area.

The Pre-Submission Plan & Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.7 A draft ('Pre-Submission') version of the Plan was consulted on between January and March 2017 in accordance with the Regulations. The Plan was presented to obtain the views of the local community and other organisations on its proposed vision, objectives and land use policies. This final version of the Plan has taken account of all the representations received. Importantly, no matters were raised that were considered to require major modifications to the Plan. A full account of the

feedback received and of how the final policies have been modified as a result is included in the separate Consultation Statement published for the examination.

1.8 The Parish Council requested a screening opinion from the District Council to determine the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under EU directives 42/2001 and the 2004 Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations.

1.9 This screening opinion concluded that there is such a need as the Plan could possibly lead to some significant environmental effects. Although the Neighbourhood Plan has not, in the end, contained any housing site allocation policies that were assumed in the screening opinion, the Parish Council decided to continue to prepare a Final SEA report. This exercise was undertaken to inform the Plan and a draft report was published for consultation alongside the Draft Plan. The final version of the report, which reflects the minor modifications made to the Plan, is also published as a separate document for examination.

2. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

Location

2.1 The Parish of Slapton lies within the Aylesbury Vale District (AVDC) of the County of Buckinghamshire. The official population, according to the 2011 Census, is recorded as 530 people living in 225 households.¹

Landscape

2.2 The Parish lies within the Ouzel Valley catchment landscape area. Comparatively low lying, with numerous watercourses, the land drains eastwards to the River Ouzel. It is characterised by sparse tree cover and a mosaic of fields, first enclosed during the early 19 century. The evidence of medieval ploughing still exists in strong ridge and furrow markings in several fields adjacent to the Grand Union Canal. The intrinsic rural character contributes to the distinctive look of the area. It is considered that overall the landscape is moderately sensitive to change².

Character

2.3 The Parish covers 1,413 acres of which the vast majority is still agricultural. The three settlements that exist are linked by footpaths, with the Grand Union Canal towpath, the spine that runs from north to south. As well as arable crops, beef cattle, sheep and poultry are all reared locally. In addition there is a farm for specialist breeds of ducks and hens, bred largely for 'fanciers' to exhibit, or as domestic pets. Slapton also has a strong equestrian tradition, and New Bury Farm Equestrian Village, on the eastern side of the Parish caters for this interest. Competitors and spectators from across the United Kingdom are attracted to events hosted here.

2.4 The Grand Union Canal, provides the opportunity for some appropriate, small scale commercial opportunities. The Grove Lock public house, and a small lay-by marina and campsite adjacent, have been developed since 2000 from a depot previously owned by British Waterways. Hill Farm and Orchard, sited next to the canal by Slapton Canal Bridge has diversified and provides 'glamping' opportunities in four wooden wigwams. This scale and type of development enhances the tranquil, rural setting.

2.5 A haulage depot has developed on the B488. This has been a commercial site for many years. It is prominent in the landscape, with few mitigating features. Most recently a solar farm has been constructed at Church Farm, bringing direct financial benefit to the community. Employment opportunities are more fully described later in this plan.

2.6 The Parish is dominated, south to north by three distinctive man-made linear features, namely the West Coast main-line railway, which delineates most of the

¹ Source: Census 2011 (table KS102EW) Rural community profile for Slapton (Parish) © ACRE, RCAN, OCSI 2013.

² Aylesbury Vale District Council & Buckinghamshire County Council Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment LCA 8.3 Ouzel Valley Catchment Landscape Character Type: LCT Vale *revised 2008*

Western boundary and running almost parallel to it, the B488 road and the Grand Union Canal.

2.7 Three quite separate areas of permanent settlement exist: the village of Slapton, lying on an unclassified road in the southeast of the Parish and the smaller hamlets of Horton and Grove lying on the southern and northern edges, respectively. There is also a small site for travellers and gypsies, which forms a separate community, about a mile from the centre of Slapton village on the B488. Horton lies on the B488 and Grove is situated close to the Grand Union Canal, accessed by an unclassified no-through-road leading from the B488.

2.8 Slapton itself is situated between the Grand Union Canal and the River Ouzel; every road leading into the village crosses water. Older maps show the location of numerous ponds, and land drains were essential to prevent waterlogging of arable fields. The bridges at Whistle Brook and the River Ouzel mark the County and Parish boundaries respectively. The bridge over the canal is on the Horton Road.

Settlement Evolution

Slapton Village - Early 20 Century

2.9 The settlement of Slapton was typical of rural villages at the beginning of the 20th century, in that it could provide for most of its own needs. As well as the Church of the Holy Cross, there was a Methodist chapel and a school. The latter closed in 1991. Flour was ground at the watermill at the end of the aptly named Mill Road and the brewery kept the village supplied with ale. The Old Forge exists now as a property name only.

2.10 There were a number of orchards, predominately stocked with a variety of damson called the Aylesbury Prune. Apart from farming, the main industry for the cottager dwellers during the 19th century was in making straw plait for the hat industry in Luton and it is understood that the 'prune' was part of this process, producing a rich pink dye. The brickyard on Horton Road disappeared after a relatively short life, although the pit from which the clay was dug still exists as a pond behind Hill Farm Cottages and the brick drying sheds are visible in photographs from 1910.

Mid 20 Century

2.11 Between 1931 and 1951, the population of Slapton almost doubled, from 145 to 237. This was due, in no small part, to the introduction of local authority housing, which brought new families into the village. With the influx of people the character of the village changed. Roads were upgraded to suit motor vehicles, and as prosperity increased, more and more tradespeople from Leighton Buzzard made regular deliveries of food, hardware and fancy goods to the village. Instead of being dependent on the local farms to provide employment, men, and it was mainly men in the 1950s, began to travel away from home to work.

Late 20 Century to the Present Day

2.12 At the end of the 20th century, the centre of Slapton village began to change again. The land close to the church belonging to Church Farm was sold and Tornay Court was developed. The glebe land associated with the Rectory was developed, giving us Rectory Close, and the original farmyard serving Bury Farm was developed into Bury Farm Close. The recreation ground was also provided as part of this development. At the beginning of the 21st century Orchard Farm House in Horton Road was demolished and replaced by five dwellings. The most recent development is Knyghton Close, opposite the church. This Rural Exception Scheme was permitted to serve an assessed need for affordable homes in the village.

2.13 Today Slapton is classified as a small village in the AVDC Settlement Hierarchy. It has one pub, The Carpenters Arms, the church and village hall. Within the Parish there is a second pub, The Grove Lock, next to the canal at Grove, created in 2001 from a former lock house and commercial depot that served British Waterways and the canal. Second only to the church, The Carpenters Arms, dating back to the 16th century, is the oldest and most picturesque building in the village. With its thatched roof over a timber frame filled with red brick, it is a fine example of a small, traditional country pub. Otherwise, Slapton contains few old buildings that have sufficient merit to be afforded specific protection; however they do tell a story of development over time. To celebrate these buildings, together with the thirteen listed buildings and structures in the Parish, a photographic supplement accompanies this Neighbourhood Plan.

Settlement Evolution Horton and Grove

2.14 Horton and Grove were both farming communities, but with less 20th or 21st century development involving the demolition of older buildings, both settlements retain a more obvious sense of history. The church at Grove, dedicated to St Michael, was sold and converted to a dwelling in the 1960s. Around the same time a large farmhouse was redeveloped in the style of a Victorian gothic mansion. Similarly, Horton has two larger country houses extended over time, although one is on the site of an earlier moated farmhouse. The public house, the King's Head, has been a private residence for many years.

2.15 Unfortunately the busy B488 bisecting Horton detracts from the overall rural nature of this hamlet and traffic tends to be the predominant characteristic. Horton is already inundated by traffic with around 10,000 vehicle movements per day³. Most recent development here has been of small cul-de-sacs, often the conversion of farm buildings and some new build designed to harmonise with the setting. The older Brocas Way echoes the past, named after the de Brocas family who were given Horton after the Norman Conquest.

2.16 In stark contrast to Horton, the access to Grove is via a no through road that terminates at the canal, and this part of the Parish remains undeniably rural. A number of farm buildings have been converted to dwellings over the last twenty years, but the overall layout of the settlement has not changed.

³ Records of traffic movement have been collected using a moving vehicle recorder (MVAS) located at the Eastern approach to Horton, since September 2016

Sustainability

2.17 According to the Rural Community Profile for Slapton (Parish) (© ACRE, RCAN, OCSI 2013), sustainable communities are active, inclusive and safe, fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other community activities.

2.18 The range of interests pursued by groups within the community is quite impressive. It is a dynamic list marked as much by change as by tradition. The Annual Fete, the WI, Book Club and Craft Club are regular fixtures. The Slapton Players, the amateur dramatics group, put on performances twice a year. Concerts, quizzes and Bingo nights are organised. A newly registered charity, The Spirit of Slapton, organises events to raise funds to support Holy Cross Church in its mission to restore the bells in time to celebrate the 1918 Armistice. National events are celebrated by Garden Parties, and 'the Big Lunch' originally held to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday looks set to become an annual fixture. Recently a 'Good Neighbours' group has been started to match those who need help with those who are willing to provide it.

2.19 The closest shops are about 2 miles away. Sustainable travel choices within the Parish are extremely limited. In common with most rural villages in England the population is fairly dependent on private motorcars, although there is a bus service to Leighton Buzzard in the late morning or early afternoon, and a return service mid-afternoon. There is no direct service to Aylesbury. Cheddington railway station, on the west coast mainline, offers good connectivity north and south. It lies approximately 2 miles from the centre of Slapton.

2.20 There are a number of employment opportunities within the Parish, but many residents of working age travel out of the Parish. Fibre (FTTC) broadband has particularly benefited those residents who work from home.

2.21 There is no school within the village. Many primary aged children attend their nearest school, Cheddington, and secondary aged children attend Cottesloe School in Wing or the Aylesbury Grammar Schools. Others may travel across the county boundary to schools in Leighton Buzzard, which provides a fully comprehensive education, and a few may receive a private education, with the closest opportunity in Berkhamsted.

2.22 Despite its undeniably rural location, Slapton is well placed in terms of proximity to well developed large centres, Leighton Buzzard, Aylesbury and Luton all within easy reach by private transport.

3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Parish lies within the Aylesbury Vale District in the County of Buckinghamshire.

3.2 The National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) published by the Government in 2012 is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and Neighbourhood Plans. A Plan must demonstrate that it is consistent with the provisions of the NPPF. The following paragraphs of the NPPF are especially relevant to the SPNP:

- Supporting a prosperous rural economy (paragraph 28)
- Good Design (paragraph 58)
- Protecting healthy communities (paragraph 70)
- Protecting local green spaces (paragraph 76)
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (paragraph 109)
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraph 126)
- Neighbourhood planning (paragraph 185)

3.3 The District Council has planning policies that are helping to shape strategy and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan must also be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan.

The Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (AVDLP)

3.4 The Plan must demonstrate general conformity with the AVDLP and have regard to the NPPF. The VALP is currently being developed, so it is against the saved policies of the AVDLP that this NDP is judged. This Plan does not have policies relating back to every saved policy of the Local District Plan, and it is a presumption that where no NDP policy exists, then the determining policy is that within the Local Plan.

3.5 Many of the saved policies relate to strategic development e.g. GP25 – Re-opening of rail routes, others relate to specific issues geographically located elsewhere e.g. GP 80 – The Wendover Arm of the GU Canal, and all the policies which relate specifically to large towns in the district. However, a number of the policies, listed below, are closely reflected in the Slapton Parish NDP, and it is against these policies, *particularly* but not *exclusively*, that conformity may be judged.

- GP2 – Affordable housing
- GP8 – Protection of amenity of residents
- GP17 – Retention in use of existing employment sites
- GP32 – Retention of shops, public houses and post offices
- GP35 – Design of new development
- GP94 – Provision of community facilities and services
- RA3 – Extension of residential curtilages into open countryside
- RA11 – Conversion of buildings in the countryside
- RA29 – Proposals for new employment in the countryside

3.6 Although of limited scope, these policies therefore provide the basis on which the general conformity of the Plan with the development plan will be assessed.

The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP)

3.7 The Proposed Submission VALP was published for consultation in November 2017, prior to its submission for examination and adoption by the end of 2018. The VALP sets the spatial and growth strategy for the District over the Plan period 2013 to 2033 and contains development management policies to replace those saved from the AVDLP.

3.8 The most relevant strategic policies of the VALP are:

- S3 Settlement Hierarchy & Cohesive Development – which identifies Slapton village as a 'smaller village' in the hierarchy
- S8 Neighbourhood Plans – establishing the core relationship between the VALP and Neighbourhood Plans
- D3 Housing Development at Smaller Villages – setting no housing supply targets for these villages but allowing for either Neighbourhood Plans to make such proposals or small schemes (< 6 homes) within set criteria
- D10 Gypsy/Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Sites – see below
- H1 Affordable Housing – requiring all housing schemes of 11 or more homes or on sites of 0.3 Ha to deliver at least 25% affordable homes on site
- H6 Housing Mix – setting out the principles to meet housing needs to 2033 by type and tenure
- E2 Other Employment Sites – allowing for the redevelopment of existing employment land where justified
- BE1 Heritage Assets – restating national policy on sustaining and enhancing heritage assets
- BE2 Design – establishing some generic design principles for new development
- NE2 Biodiversity – setting out the principles of protecting and enhancing biodiversity through development
- NE5 Landscape Character – ensuring development accords with the defined landscape character of the local area
- NE7 Local Green Spaces – setting out how development within designated Spaces will be managed
- I3 Community Facilities – seeking to protect facilities from unnecessary loss

3.9 The Neighbourhood Plan will be examined before the adoption of the VALP, and therefore it will be examined, in terms of its conformity, against the saved policies of the AVDLP. But, as the two Plans appear to be reaching their final stages along similar time-lines, the evidence and reasoning of the VALP have been fully considered.

3.10 As reported earlier in this plan, policies have been developed describing the development that Slapton Parish will support in the event of the District Council requiring the delivery of further housing later in the lifetime of the plan. It also details the criteria against which such development will be judged to ensure that the existing rural character of the Parish is preserved. This plan will enable the Parish and District Councils to make decisions regarding planning applications in the knowledge that these are firmly grounded in Policies that are supported by the public.

Travellers and Gypsies

3.11 The local community has expressed significant concerns in recent years on the cumulative effects on community life of a higher than average number of registered traveller and gypsy sites in and around the Parish. Such matters are normally regarded as strategic policy for review and management by Local Plans, not Neighbourhood Plans.

3.12 However, there is no saved policy in the AVDLP managing these types of proposal and so they are considered by the District Council (and by neighbouring Central Bedfordshire Council, which also lacks on up-to-date policy) on their merits.

3.13 The District Council is intending to cover these issues in the VALP and it is therefore not appropriate for this Neighbourhood Plan to do so. But, given the high level of interest by local people, the Proposed Submission VALP policy (D10) is detailed below.

Proposed Submission VALP Policy D10 Gypsy/Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Sites

Proposals for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Sites or Gypsy and Traveller park home sites will be supported where it can be demonstrated that there is an identified need, taking into account existing local provision and the availability of alternative sites, and the following criteria have been met:

- a. *It has reasonable access to existing local services and facilities (including shops, schools, healthcare and public transport). Sites should either be within or close to existing sustainable settlements or with good access to major roads and/or public transport*
- b. *Have safe and convenient vehicular access without giving rise to adverse impacts on highway safety*
- c. *Be able to achieve a reasonable level of visual and acoustic privacy for both people living on the site and those living nearby*
- d. *Not have a significantly adverse impact on environmental assets such as the countryside, landscapes, the historic environment, biodiversity, watercourses (including an ecological buffer zone), open space and green infrastructure*
- e. *The size and scale of the site and the number of caravans stationed is appropriate to the size and density of the local settled community, and does not dominate the nearest settled community*
- f. *The site should not be located where there is a risk of flooding or be affected by environmental hazards that may affect residents' health or welfare*
- g. *The site must be capable of being adequately serviced by drinking water, utilities and sewerage disposal facilities*
- h. *Sites should remain small in scale - no more normally than 15 pitches on any one site*
- i. *Sites should be suitably designed and the layout include enough space to accommodate the proposed number of caravans, landscaping, vehicles and ancillary work areas as appropriate.*

In the case of Travelling Showpeople, proposals will be also be assessed taking into account the needs for mixed use yards and the nature and scale of the Showpeople's business in terms of land required for storage and/or the exercising of animals. Sites in the Green Belt will not be permitted unless other locations have been considered and only then where very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

3.14 It is noted that the District Council has set a potential allocation of 3 additional pitches at Willows Park, but has not allocated any land for further provision within Slapton Parish.

3.15 In its supporting text, the policy acknowledges the need to make appropriate provision and advises that the planning system should ensure that sites are located in appropriate locations. It recognises that Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers form a minority ethnic group legally protected against discrimination. It defines Gypsies and Travellers, for planning purposes, as “persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such.” The text explains how judgements regarding the status of Gypsies and Travellers will be made according to the nomadic lifestyle or whether this has ceased permanently or temporarily.

3.16 The District Council is obliged to set a pitch and plot provision target over the short, medium and longer term. The text reports the Assessment of Need carried out at a county level in 2017. It concluded that there is a need to find 8 new permanent pitches within the district for those meeting the new definition, and up to 76 pitches for those who it is not known if they meet the new definition, by 2033, but no identified need to provide transit pitches as there is little evidence of travelling through the area. The 2013 joint Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment recommended that:

- *existing sites should be safeguarded, to ensure that needs continue to be met in perpetuity*
- *identification of additional pitch provision should take into account where the need arises*
- *councils should be reasonably flexible about the location of small private sites*
- *councils should investigate the potential for existing sites to achieve additional pitches/plots either through increasing the capacity within existing boundaries or through site extension onto adjoining land, and*
- *councils should also undertake site assessment work to identify new sites to meet identified future Gypsy and Traveller needs.*

3.17 The text contains the rationale for assessment of current provision and whether confirming permanent status on temporary provisions would meet the assessed need. The second consideration was expansion of existing sites, then potential for brownfield land development where there was capacity for growth on these sites. Sites with temporary permission were considered initially, followed by the consideration of the intensification/expansion of existing sites. Next would be development on brownfield land, and allocation of pitches as part of housing development; finally land identified for employment use that was not required and later released for housing.

4. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON PLANNING ISSUES

4.1 On the basis of the Parish Appraisal Report of 1989-1990 along with The Slapton Fact Pack of 2011, it is evident that the overall feeling in the Parish, over the last 27 years, has been that some limited growth on housing should be accommodated within the Parish. However, there has always been a strong desire to retain the village feel of each settlement.

4.2 Since 1990 at least 50 new properties have been built in the Parish; increasing housing stock by 25%, of which over 43 have been larger houses and 7 have been affordable houses. Throughout this period the community has generally supported development of housing within the Parish, but the prime areas of concern with regards to planning where houses are developed have always been:

- Where the housing is developed
- The visual impact of the housing (aesthetically and impact on landscape and views)
- The design of the housing

4.3 There is a lack of 'infill sites' in the Parish, with the exception of:

- The present Village Hall site where planning permission may be later proposed for the development of 2 properties
- A current dwelling on Horton Road which is to be demolished, where planning permission has been given for the development of 4 properties

4.4 Longstanding concerns highlighted have also been:

- Travellers and gypsy sites and their increase in size, both on Horton Road (which falls within the Parish) and Billington Road (which lies outside the Parish in Bedfordshire)
- Lack of affordable housing

4.5 More recent issues within the community, regarding planning, have included:

- Employment land
- The Village Hall – which was identified in 2011 by the Parish Plan as being dated and either in need of extensive renovation or redevelopment.

4.6 The Steering Group, made up of a cross-section of the local community, were appointed by the Parish Council in August 2015, following a leaflet drop to every household, including Willows Park Travellers Site, Whaddon Farm (The Lodge) haulage and small works depot and Bury Farm Equestrian Centre, requesting volunteers. The Steering Group, formed from these volunteers, initially comprised of four Task Groups:

- Site Analysis
- Green Issues
- Design
- Community Facilities (which also included employment land)

4.7 Each group carried out five months' extensive research on their subject and gathered evidence and data to inform their findings. Reports were compiled, published on the dedicated Slapton Parish Neighbourhood Plan website and presented to the Parish over a two day period; over 120 parishioners attended the events. Steering Group and Task Group members were available at these consultations to talk through their research and answer questions raised. The community were also encouraged to feedback on the findings of the Task Groups with both positive and negative comments.

4.8 This feedback was collated, and necessitated follow-up work for 3 months, including the formation of a fifth Task Group – Traveller Sites. The Traveller Site Task Group also carried out research and gathered evidence to produce a report which was published on the dedicated website and a summary sent to each household with the delivery of the Household Survey.

4.9 The informal consultations and feedback from the community, when collated, along with the follow-up work, formed the basis for a Household Survey which was distributed to each adult in the community over 16 and delivered to every household in the Parish.

4.10 Each survey was hand-delivered and collected by Steering Group members, providing an opportunity for meaningful discussions with parishioners during this process. A total of 307 surveys were returned with 189 households (78%) out of 243 households in the Parish completing surveys. It is of note that this *actual* household figure exceeds the figure quoted earlier in this plan, which was the *official* household figure, as recorded by the 2011 census. The results of the survey were collated and presented to the Parish Council.

4.11 The Steering Group has been fully active throughout the entire process engaging in:

- Regular full Steering Group meetings
- Regular Task Group meetings
- Consultation with the planning consultant, appointed by the Parish Council
- Regular updates to the Parish Council at Parish Council meetings

4.12 The Steering Group has communicated and engaged with the community within the Parish through:

- A dedicated Slapton Parish Neighbourhood Plan website which is constantly updated and well publicised (www.slaptonparish.org.uk)
- Monthly updates in 'The Villager' – the monthly Parish newsletter
- Posters publicising the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and associated events
- Flyers delivered to households
- Banners to promote the informal consultations
- Feedback and updates at Parish Council meetings
- Updates on Parish Council noticeboards

- Informal consultations
- The Household Survey
- The Steering Group have been proactive in making the information available to all – offering hard copies of reports etc, when requested and support to fill out surveys, where needed.

4.13 During 2015 and 2016, the Site Analysis Task Group identified a number of possible sites for development. Following the informal consultations, six of these sites were included in the Household Survey with an indication of the potential number of houses that could be built on each site. The consensus of opinion, via the survey, was very strong for two sites and, whilst 73% and 63% of the community supported development of each of the two sites. One of them has since been granted planning permission; the other has been reserved for future development in the Plan.

4.14 The feedback on the Pre Submission Plan was generally supportive of its policies and proposals. The decision not to make any housing site allocations, but to reserve land if it is needed later in the plan period, has been backed.

Provision for Travellers Gypsies and Travelling Show People

4.15 Slapton Parish has one site for Travellers and Gypsies. This site, Willows Farm, is situated on the B488 within a mile of the village. The traffic to and from this site does not, of necessity, use the road through the village, although it does pass through Horton. Development anywhere along the B488 would further compound the problem through Horton.

4.16 The unclassified road from the centre of Slapton towards Billington serves as the access to Toddbury Farm and Green Acres, two large sites in Bedfordshire. As a consequence of this proximity the overwhelming majority of the community has expressed concern that the village of Slapton could be dominated by expansion or additional provision within the Parish boundary. It is noted that as Slapton is classified as a 'small village', it is not currently required to deliver additional housing, although two sites have been reserved (see Policy SLP2). As such it is not anticipated that over the lifetime of the Plan there would be an increase in services which would improve the sustainability of the location to such a degree that further expansion or provision for travellers would be appropriate. It is known that Billington Parish have similar concerns, and this represents an opportunity for cross-boundary co-operation.

5. Vision, Objectives & Policies

Vision

5.1 The Vision of the Neighbourhood Plan is:

“This plan will ensure that Slapton Parish retains its sense of community by carefully managing change within its boundaries, by creating opportunities for employment growth which are appropriate, in scale, design and type, for this rural location; by ensuring its diverse mix of housing is preserved and by protecting its setting and surrounding countryside from anything that harms the distinctive rural character, distinctive architecture and environmental heritage.

Our vision for Slapton Parish in 2033 is that it will remain a distinctive, rural community comprising the village of Slapton and the hamlets of Horton and Grove and will have conserved and enhanced its distinctive architecture, historical and environmental heritage for the benefit of current villagers and for future generations.”

Objectives

5.2 To achieve this vision a number of key objectives have been identified as follows:

- To manage housing growth in the village of Slapton within a clearly defined settlement boundary that preserves the setting of the village - **see Policy SLP1**
- To reserve the most suitable land in Slapton village for possible future homes - **see Policy SLP2**
- To encourage the development of new community facilities - **see Policy SLP3**
- To support designated employment sites to grow in suitable ways - **see Policy SLP 4**
- To protect green spaces for the future enjoyment of the local community - **see Policy SLP5**
- To define the mix and type of housing, giving due regard to design principles in line with the character of the village - **see Policy SLP 6**

Land Use Planning Policies

5.3 Land use policies are used to determine planning applications made for development proposals. They can establish the principles for retaining or changing the use of land in settlements and in the countryside. They can also set out the conditions against which development proposals will be judged in terms of their design, access etc.

5.4 The purpose of these policies is to either encourage the sustainable development the local community wants to see happen or to discourage development which the local community would consider to be inappropriate with regards to the local context of the village. Policies must be clearly written so that they can be easily interpreted and applied in the consideration and determination of planning applications.

5.5 The Plan deliberately avoids repeating existing national or local planning policies. The proposed policies therefore focus on a relatively small number of key development issues in the area. For all other planning matters, (i.e. where this Plan is silent) the national and local policies of underpinning policy - the National Planning Policy Framework and the saved policies of the AVDLP and later the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan - will continue to be used.

5.6 Set out below are the proposed policies of the Plan. Each policy has a number and title and the policy itself is written in bold italics for ease of reference. There is also a short statement explaining the intention of the policy and any other relevant background information. Where a policy refers to a specific site or area then it is shown on the relevant Inset of the Policies Map published as separate documents to this report.

Policy SLP1: Slapton Settlement Boundary

The Neighbourhood Plan defines a Slapton Settlement Boundary, as shown on the Policies Map.

Proposals for infill development within the boundary will be supported, provided they accord with the design and development management policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. Proposals for the sub-division of large housing plots to develop in rear gardens will be resisted.

Proposals for development elsewhere in the Parish, including within the smaller settlements of Horton and Grove, will only be supported if:

- i. They are necessary and suited to a countryside location e.g. a rural worker's dwelling; and***
- ii. Development positively contributes to the landscape in which it sits and is in harmony with the form and character of the Ouzel Valley Catchment Area and its settlements; or***
- iii. In the case of Horton and Grove, proposals are confined to the infill of land between existing buildings on small plots that deliver up to five homes or to the redevelopment of existing footprint of buildings in the plot.***

5.7 In the Household Survey carried out in June 2016, the Parishioners indicated overwhelming (78.5%) support for a settlement boundary policy to be designated by the Plan.

5.8 This policy establishes and defines the Slapton Settlement Boundary for the village of Slapton, to distinguish the consideration of planning applications within the settlement from those outside the boundary. In doing so, it replaces saved AVDLP policies RA3, RA13 and RA14 relating to development within and adjoining rural settlements in so far as they are applied in the designated neighbourhood area.

5.9 Slapton is the largest settlement in the Parish and is the focus of the Neighbourhood Plan. The village is, however, small in District terms and sits within an open landscape that defines its rural character. It is therefore crucial that new developments, regardless of their uses, are located in the built-up area, to minimise

the impact they have on the landscape. The two smaller settlements at Horton and Grove have no services and are unsustainable locations for new housing growth.

5.10 This policy therefore sets the spatial strategy for the Plan. Its objectives are to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside but to allow for sustainable growth to meet local housing needs over the Plan period. In which case, the Boundary follows the existing observed built-up area and accommodates the housing site reservations on either side of Mill Road proposed by Policy SLP2 of the Plan and the proposed new village hall of Policy SLP3.

5.11 If needed by Aylesbury Vale, in due course, this reserved housing land will deliver approximately 12 new homes in addition to the 31 homes consented since April 2013 in the Parish. Given the Proposed Submission VALP does not set targets for development in the Parish for the plan period, it has already contributed positively towards the objectively assessed housing need for the District in the period of 2013 – 2033. This strategy is consistent with the emerging spatial strategy for the District and the assigned status of Slapton as a 'small village', and in line with the wishes of the community. In the household Survey of June 2016, 85.8% of respondents wished to meet but not exceed the target set by AVDC.

5.12 In Slapton, although the Settlement Boundary is drawn to show the full extent of plots that form the village, the policy makes it clear that proposals for back garden development within the Boundary will be resisted, as this intensification would change the rural character of the village. At Horton and Grove, the policy will allow only for small infill schemes to reflect their remoteness in the Parish and the absence of any local services or facilities.

Policy SLP2: Housing Site Reservations

The Neighbourhood Plan reserves land on both sides of Mill Road, as shown on the Policies Map, for the development of approximately 12 dwellings. The land will be released for development within the Plan period in one or more of the following situations:

- ***The adopted Local Plan requires a greater number of new homes to be met in Slapton village for the plan period to 2033 than has already been committed; or***
- ***The District Council fails to maintain a five-year supply of housing land after the adoption of the Local Plan.***

In the event that the land is released for development, proposals for the housing scheme will be supported, provided:

- i. The houses front on to Mill Road and comprise a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached houses of 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms of a form, massing scale and layout that reflects the Mill Road Character Area;***
- ii. The layout and landscape scheme provide an effective and appropriate landscape buffer to the road and the open countryside;***
- iii. The development proposals demonstrate there will be a net gain in biodiversity; and***
- iv. A safe and convenient form of highway access is provided.***

5.13 This policy reserves two plots of land on Mill Road (0.15ha on the eastern side and 0.15ha on its western side) on the north-eastern edge of the village for housing development beyond the plan period. A small housing scheme of 8 homes has recently been consented on the western side, to which the reserved land on that side of the road will be a small extension.

5.14 In the Household Survey carried out in June 2016, the Parishioners indicated their preference for development on sites in Mill Road, 72% favouring Site 1 (east of the road) and 63% favouring site 19a (west of the road).

5.15 The land is only reserved for this purpose, as it is not required in the current plan period to meet local housing need. It is, however, the most sustainable way of growing the village as and when the District spatial strategy requires development in such places, now that the land opposite has been consented for a scheme that extends development north along Mill Road.

5.16 Should it become necessary for the land to be released for development within the plan period for reasons beyond the direct control of the Parish Council, the policy sets out the conditions by which this may happen. This approach is designed to show the local community is positive about planning for new homes in the most sustainable part of the village. Should it not arise, then the expectation is that the land will be allocated in the first review of the Neighbourhood Plan when it is rolled forward to cover the period beyond 2033.

Policy SLP3: Village Hall

Proposals for the development of a new village hall to serve the Parish will be supported, provided:

- i. The land adjoins the defined Settlement Boundary of Policy SLP1;***
- ii. The scheme meets the specification agreed by the local planning authority and Parish Council for the facility, comprising a building, ancillary outdoor operational space, car parking and allotments/community gardens;***
- iii. The scheme has full regard to sustaining and enhancing the significance of any designated heritage assets and their setting;***
- iv. A safe and convenient form of highway access is provided***
- v. The scheme provides the required off-road car parking spaces to meet its needs in line with the adopted standards of the Local Plan;***
- vi. Safe pedestrian and cycle access is made to serve the scheme;***
- vii. The scheme includes street lighting to ensure the safety of users which is also appropriate for the rural location of the site; and***
- viii. The landscape scheme improves the effectiveness of any existing mature vegetation on the site boundaries to screen the scheme from the open countryside and protect the amenity of neighbouring properties.***

Should the proposals require any enabling housing development, then the following conditions will apply:

- viii. The housing scheme must contribute in full the delivery of the facility as defined in point (ii);***

- ix. ***The housing scheme should comprise only the minimum number of dwellings to meet the requirements of part (viii); and***
- x. ***Prior to the occupation of any dwelling in the proposed housing in this scheme a S106 Obligation shall be signed which covers the provision of any necessary gap funding and the transfer of land as defined in point (ii) to the Parish Council.***

5.17 In the Household Survey carried out in June 2016, Parishioners expressed overwhelming support for a new Village Hall to replace the existing facility in the village, with between 80% and 90% supporting a space for celebrations, existing clubs and societies, meetings, amateur dramatics, film projection equipment and outside area with seating. A slightly smaller percentage, 68% - 72% also supported (very strongly or strongly) a space for a community shop/café.

5.18 This policy provides for the replacement of the village hall on land adjoining the defined boundary of Policy SLP1. There is more than one potential location that may be suited to this use, and so a criteria-based approach has been adopted. The policy also provides for an enabling housing scheme to fund the village hall development.

5.19 The existing hall is the only dedicated community facility in the village. Although popular, it is not well suited to modern use and the land owner wishes to redevelop the site for housing, once its relocation has been secured. During the preparation of the plan, two sites have been made available for this purpose by local land owners and others may come forward in due course. The Parish Council aims to agree a specification for the replacement facility. To ensure a successful scheme, the policy requires attention is paid to car and pedestrian access and that its design acknowledges and responds to other potential heritage and landscape constraints of building on the edge of the village.

5.20 The policy also requires that any enabling housing scheme will guarantee the delivery of the replacement facility through the transfer of land and provision of the gap funding prior to its completion. It is expected such a guarantee will be met through a S106 Planning Obligation. In these circumstances, where there is no additional housing land supply requirement in the plan period beyond the sites reserved in Policy SLP2, it is reasonable to make these requirements of a housing scheme that would not otherwise be supported outside the defined Settlement Boundary. The determination of the number of dwellings will be made using an 'open book' viability appraisal of the housing scheme, which must be submitted with the planning application.

Policy SLP4: Employment Sites

Proposals that will lead to additional employment will be supported at Bury Farm Equestrian Centre, Whaddon Farm and Grove Lock Public House, Grove Lock Marina & Campsite, provided:

- i. ***Their visual and environmental impact on the landscape can be satisfactorily mitigated;***
- ii. ***The required provision is made for additional on-site car parking in line with the adopted standards of the Local Plan; and***

- iii. ***They are not of a scale that would lead to significant harm in respect of traffic movements through Horton, and Slapton village.***

Proposals for non-agricultural employment development at any other location in the Parish will be resisted, unless they are:

- i. ***Business uses that are ancillary to the agricultural uses, or***
- ii. ***Small cottage industries that do not require new buildings or premises extensions which would result in any level of adverse impact on the landscape or increase in traffic.***

5.20 This policy is designed to support increasing and sustainable employment opportunities for the residents of the Parish and surrounding areas, using its well-established employment sites, e.g. Bury Farm, Whaddon Farm and Grove Lock. In the Household Survey carried out in June 2016, when asked if the Parish would benefit from further non-agricultural expansion at these sites, approximately 65% of the respondents either supported or had no opinion. However smaller 'cottage industries' were welcomed with 84% either supporting or held no strong views.

5.21 The larger employment sites are successful locations that may each be capable of some further intensification to create new jobs, but this must not result in harm to the local landscape character. They are all isolated in the rural landscape and are therefore sensitive locations in terms of the visual impacts of buildings in the open countryside. They also have the potential to create off-site parking problems in the local area and safety concerns on the narrow roads of Slapton parish. In which case, the policy also requires proposals to give these matters some consideration along with necessary improvements to both the water supply network and foul sewerage. The Household Survey of June 2016 indicated that only 16.5% of the local population supported commercial development outside of the three sites identified, other than 'cottage industries', i.e. business uses that are ancillary to the main agricultural use.

Policy SLP5: Local Green Spaces

The Neighbourhood Plan designates the following locations as Local Green Spaces, as shown on the Policies Map:

- i. ***The Recreation Ground***
- ii. ***Princess (Jubilee) Field***
- iii. ***Slapton Lockside***

Proposals for development on the land will only be permitted if the open character of the land is preserved, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

5.22 This policy proposes three important green spaces in the Parish are protected from development by their designation as Local Green Spaces in accordance with §76 and §77 of the NPPF. The policy has the effect of managing development proposals in line with the NPPF provisions in the Green Belt.

5.23 In each case, the green spaces play an integral part in the enjoyment of the village and are therefore special to the local community and were supported by

81% of the respondents to the Household Survey of June 2016. A fuller description of each site, and the justification for its designation, is provided in the Slapton Local Green Space Study report in the Evidence Base.

Policy SLP6: Design

Proposals for development will be supported if they conform to the design principles relevant to the character area within which they are located, as identified below and as shown on the Policies Map:

Grove

- **The form of development proposals should sustain the character of existing dwellings with spaces between adjoining buildings;**
- **Development proposals within or adjoining the cluster of listed buildings around Church Lock No.29, which defines the core character of the settlement, will be resisted where it would obstruct views to this group or the lock or undermine its visual integrity.**

Horton

- **The style and form of development proposals must reflect the present variety of buildings types and plot sizes, including retaining or providing gaps between buildings, especially in Brocas Way, that provide glimpses to open countryside beyond;**
- **Development proposals should maintain or reinforce the contribution of high hedges to the road frontages;**
- **Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they will have no harmful effects on Kings Head Cottage, Lanthorn Cottage and Horton Dene which are Listed Buildings and The Barn, the Old Chapel, Horton House which are considered non-designated heritage assets that reinforce the historical character of the settlement;**
- **Development proposals affecting farm buildings, including conversions should be designed to reinforce the rural character of the Parish.**

Slapton Character Area 1 (Mill Road)

- **Development proposals should sustain the pattern of linear development of similar building forms, plot widths and orientation on either side of the road;**
- **Development proposals on the west side of the road should retain the visual domination of the early 20th century local authority style housing stock on slightly higher land with fewer hedges;**
- **Development proposals on the east side of the road should retain the character of larger detached dwellings;**
- **All new buildings should stand well back from the road to maintain the established building line;**
- **Development proposals should maintain the pattern of gardens backing on to open countryside.**

Slapton Character Area 2 (Church Road)

- *Development proposals should sustain the pattern of buildings positioned on narrow plots fronting onto the highway with a regular rhythm of frontages;*
- *Development proposals should maintain the character of the street width narrowing towards the village centre;*
- *Development proposals should retain and reinforce the prominence of occasional mature trees and hedgerows in front gardens;*
- *Development proposals should not harm the contribution that the current road layout, including the buildings at the corner of Church Road Rectory Close, make to the character of the street scene by terminating long views into the village*

Slapton Character Area 3 (Horton Road)

- *Development proposals should sustain the pattern of linear development of similar building forms, plot widths and orientation on either side of the road;*
- *Development proposals that result in one building material or style dominating the area will be resisted; proposals should sustain the pattern of a mix of terrace, semi-detached and detached properties;*
- *Development proposals should maintain the pattern of grass verges and hedgerows between buildings and the road;*
- *Development proposals should not harm the contribution that the terrace of houses at (Sunnyside Cottages) Nos 40 to 52 at the edge of the highway makes to defining the entrance to the village from the south;*
- *Development proposals should not harm the contribution that the small terrace of houses (The Court) that are perpendicular to the road at its bend towards the village centre makes to the character of this part of the village in punctuating the view along the road.*

Slapton Character Area 4 (Bury Farm Close)

- *Development proposals should sustain the strong feeling of seclusion resulting from limited views into and out of the development;*
- *Development proposals should sustain the pattern of larger family homes, with large gardens around a central roundabout, and emphasise the contrast between housing density in the Close and other parts of Slapton;*
- *Development proposals should maintain the character of a mix of new build and farm building conversions.*

Slapton Character Area 5 (Village Centre)

- *Development proposals should not harm the contribution that the Carpenters Arms and Brewery Cottages make in defining the centre of the village; care should be taken to preserve the visual dominance of both existing buildings particularly when viewed from the South along Horton Road. Any development proposals that stand forward of the current building line of the adjacent bungalows on Horton Road, rise above the Carpenters Arms or Brewery Cottages, or obscure the view of the Maltings beyond the car-park will be resisted.*

5.24 This policy establishes the basis on which the design merits of development proposals will be judged in order to secure a planning consent. It reflects the stated wishes of the community as expressed in the Household Survey of June 2016, where

- 86% wished to see mixed developments with terraced, semi detached and detached houses
- 93% wished to have the rural setting respected with new development that harmonised with existing development
- 66.4% felt that continuing existing linear patterns of development was important and
- 84% felt that new development should not obstruct key public views.

5.25 The policy does not advocate pastiche or historic solution; however, it is important that any new development demonstrates a connection with local character and place making. This will be achieved by using the guidance set out in the Slapton Parish Character Assessment which should be read in conjunction with this Plan. The merits of exemplary contemporary building and design techniques should be assessed and embraced, as they have been in the village over the centuries; however, in a small village care must be taken that new development does not create yet another distinctive character area, resulting in a piecemeal patchwork. The over-riding consideration should be whether or not the new build harmonises with its setting.

5.26 The local community has prepared a Character Appraisal of Slapton Parish (see the Evidence Base) to identify the key characteristics that define the distinctive parts of the Parish. It has identified five character areas in the village of Slapton and one each for Horton and Grove. For each area, the appraisal describes its history and how the area appears now in terms of any dominant or common features of buildings, plots, spaces and landscape. The policy requires that applicants should demonstrate that they have had regard to the specific principles it identifies, as well as the design guidance relevant to the location of their proposals contained in the Appraisal.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented through a combination of the District Council's consideration and determination of planning applications for development in the Parish.

Development Management

6.2 Most of the policies contained in the Plan will be delivered by landowners and developers. In preparing the Plan, care has been taken to ensure, as far as possible, that the policies are achievable.

6.3 Whilst the District Council will be responsible for development management decisions, the Parish Council will use the Plan to frame its representations on submitted planning applications.

Monitoring & Review Policies

6.4 The Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored by the Parish and District Councils using data collected in planning monitoring reports. The objectives will form the core of the monitoring activity but other data collected and reported at this level that is relevant to the Plan may also be included. It is expected that the Plan will be reviewed on a five-year cycle or to coincide with the development and review of the development plan for the District, if this cycle is different.

APPENDIX A

EVIDENCE BASE

Slapton Parish Neighbourhood Plan:

- Final Strategic Environmental Assessment Report
- Site Analysis Sustainability Proposal
- Site Analysis Map Following Public Consultation
- Site Analysis AVDLP Final Policies
- Site Analysis Final Report
- Design Character Assessment
- Community Facilities Business Survey
- Community Facilities Business Report
- Community Facilities Village Facilities Report
- Community Facilities Housing report
- Community Facilities Comparison Table
- Community Facilities Pie Chart
- Community Facilities New Village Hall Review
- Community Facilities New Village Hall Site Map

VALP: Proposed Submission (2017)

Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan: Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (2017)

Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan: Settlement Hierarchy Review (2017)

Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan (2004)

Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment (2008)

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Environmental Record Centre Data

National Census 2011

Rural community profile for Slapton (Parish) © ACRE, RCAN, OCSI 2013.

Aylesbury Vale District Council & Buckinghamshire County Council Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment

LCA 8.3 Ouzel Valley Catchment Landscape Character Type: LCT Vale revised 2008

THE PARISH OF SLAPTON POLICY MAPS



Prepared by – O’Neill Homer

In conjunction with the Slapton Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group

April 2018

A Required Part Of The Evidence Base In Accordance With The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

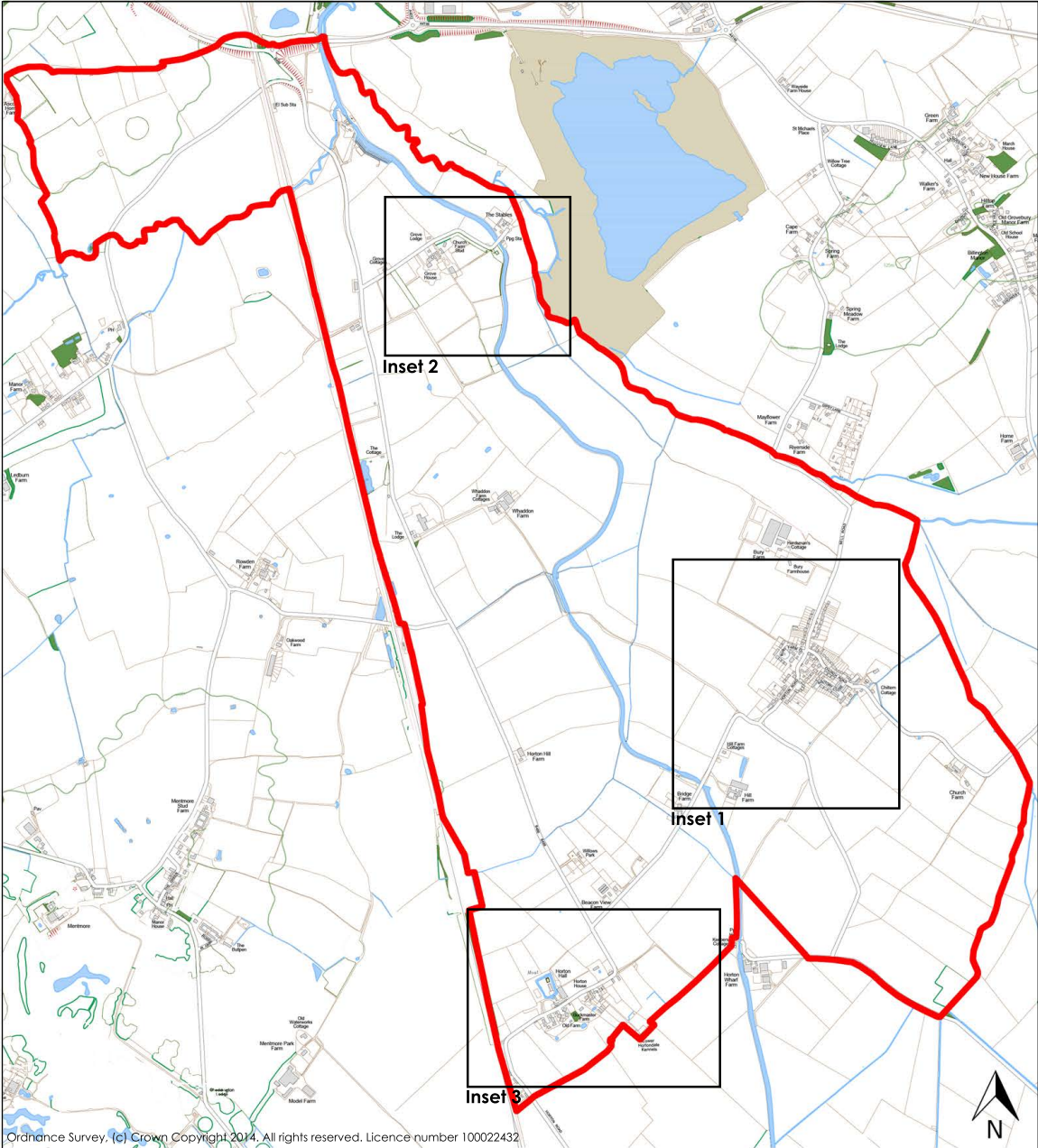
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Slapton Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Submission Plan Policies Map

December 2017

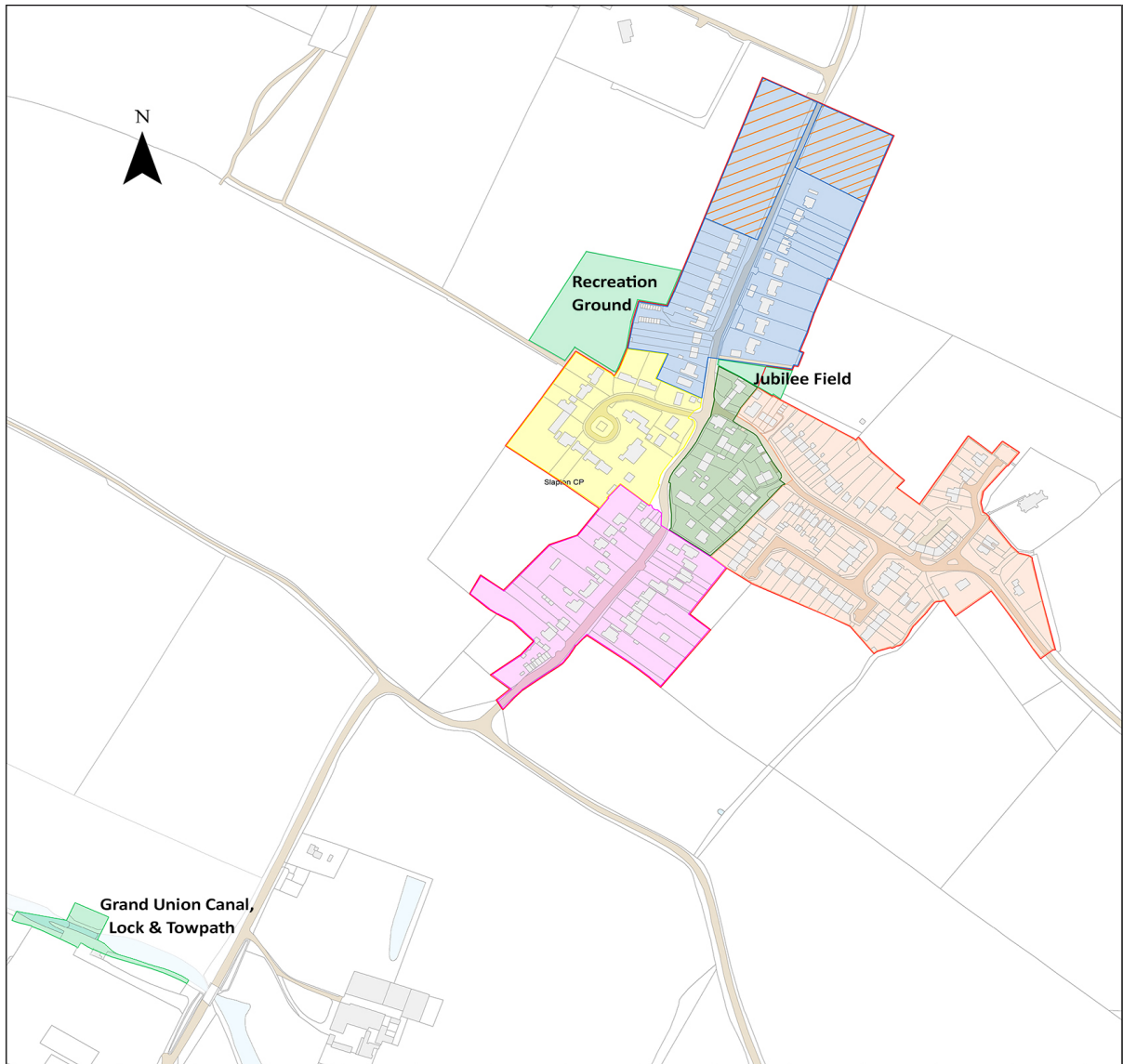


Key

 Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

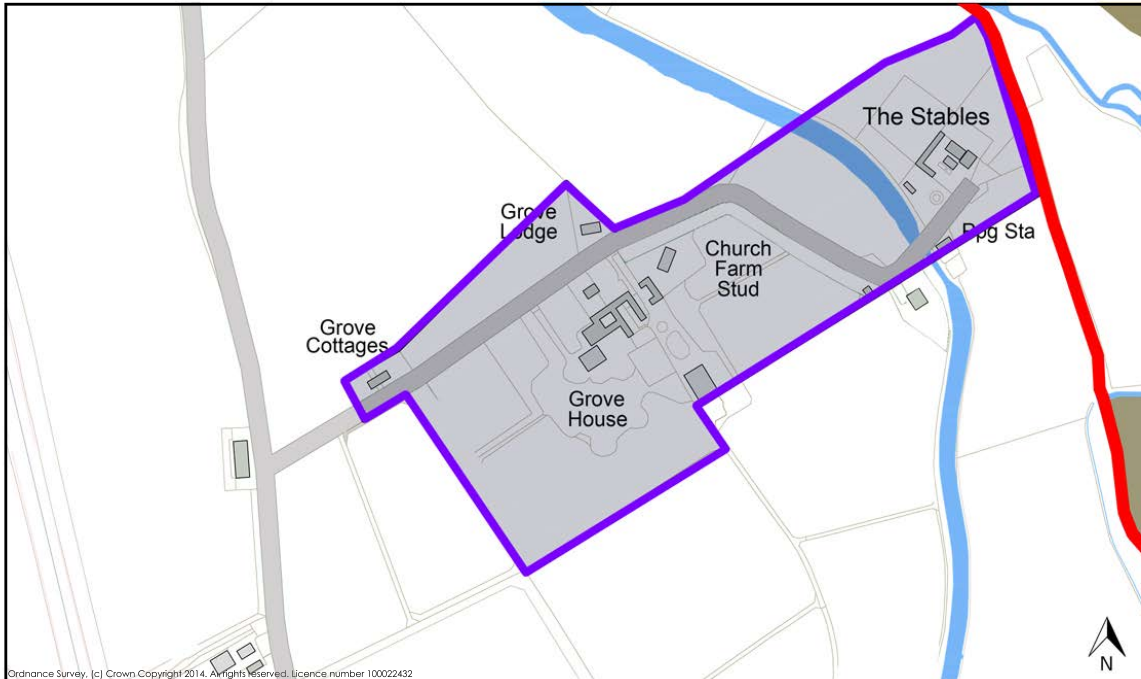
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Slapton Parish Neighbourhood Plan
 Submission Policies Map Inset 1
 April 2018



Key

	SLP1 - Slapton Settlement Boundary		SLP6 - Character Area 2
	SLP2 - Housing Site Reservations		SLP6 - Character Area 3
	SLP5 - Local Green Spaces		SLP6 - Character Area 4
	SLP6 - Character Area 1		SLP6 - Character Area 5




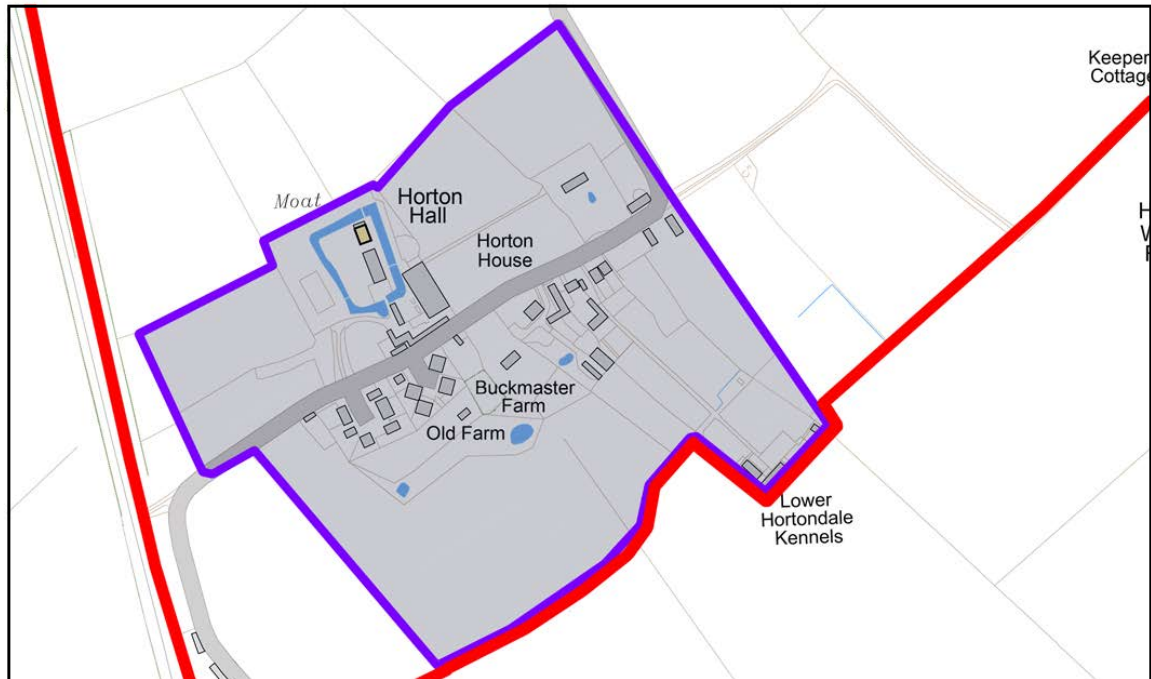
Slapton Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Submission Policies Map Inset 2
December 2017

Key

 Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

 SLP 6 - Grove Character Area




Slapton Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Submission Plan Policies Map Inset 3
December 2017

Key

 Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

 SLP 6 - Horton Character Area