Steering Group Response to Residents' Feedback on Site Assessment Conclusions

Following the publication of the Neighbourhood Plan Update March 2021, which invited feedback on the conclusions of the site assessment report, 30 responses have been received expressing a range of views. 13 respondents gave wholly or largely positive feedback on the report's recommendations, although 1 of these expressed concern about a lack of balance in the distribution of development. 9 respondents gave negative feedback on the allocation of Site NC9 but gave positive or no feedback on the report's other recommendations. 6 respondents gave wholly or largely negative feedback on the report's recommendations, querying, among other things, why some sites had not been included. 1 respondent opposed site NC4 and 1 expressed no view on the specific recommendations of the report.

As so many of the comments received raised the same concerns relating to development at Site NC9 on Folly Lane, rather than include all of the comments, verbatim, with consequent repetition of the answers, the Steering Group (SG) has summarised the concerns raised and replied accordingly. Where there is a more specific concern this has been addressed separately. The comments can be read in full in the document entitled "20210509 NCNP Site Assessment Comments" this is available in the Neighbourhood Plan section of the Parish Council Website: www.northcrawley-pc.gov.uk

	Question/Comment	Answer
1.	Unsuitability of Site 9 for development: • 7 houses is too many • The road is too narrow and would need upgrading • Pavement does not extend to the top of Folly Lane • Traffic concerns – already too busy • Cars already parked on the road, causing difficulties for passing cars • the required visibility splay of 2.4 x 70m may not be possible and would result in a significant amount of hedgerow needing to be removed, damaging the rural character of the area • in open countryside • Heritage constraints • Evaluated as unsuitable by previous consultant	Since publishing the February Update the landowner has informed the Steering Group (SG) of changes to the shape and size of site NC9. The site area available for development has been reduced to the northern half only and it is now proposed that the site may be suitable for 3 dwellings. The SG is concerned that by reducing the size of the site, the length of the road frontage no longer provides the required visibility splay. The SG has received a response from the Milton Keynes Highways Officer who, while not ruling this site out completely, has expressed serious reservations about the suitability of this site. The view of the SG is that the mitigation measures required to allow small scale development on this site are likely to make it unviable. The SG has informed the landowner of these reservations and is awaiting a response. **The response below is based on the original size of Site NC9.** The SG is conscious that many residents believe that more sites should have been considered in 2018 and so the SG has been careful to ensure that in assessing the 15 sites that were put forward in 2020, the default position was that all sites were assessed equally in terms of their potential for development. Lack of access on Folly Lane presents a problem when looking for suitable development sites and it would be easy to write off all of the proposed sites without investigating further the potential for managing access. With this in mind, the SG has engaged with the Highways Department at Milton Keynes Council (MKC) to explore possibilities for overcoming some of these access issues. It has been recognised by the Highways Department and the independent assessors and agreed by the SG, that Folly Lane is not suitable for large scale development, however, small scale development on site NC9 only - which is an enclosed site, has existing pedestrian access, the potential for adequate visibility splays and is adjacent to the existing settlement boundary, is considered marginally suitable.

		The definition of open countryside is land outside the settlement boundary. Owing to the fact that there is very little available space within the existing settlement boundary, all of the sites that have been assessed are outside the settlement boundary and so are, by definition, in open countryside. If a site is included in the Neighbourhood Plan, the settlement boundary will be redrawn to incorporate the site within the settlement boundary, thus ensuring compliance with Policy DS5 of Plan:MK. The consultants have made it clear that Site NC9 is marginally suitable "subject to other identified constraints being mitigated" and so there is acknowledgement in the report that archaeological, heritage, landscape and habitats assessments will need to be carried out as part of any planned development proposal. The developments described in paragraph 1, above, have occurred after that assessment was made. These have been shared with the consultant and any revision to the independent assessment will, of course, be shared with residents.
2.	If site 9 were recommended, because of the high costs associated with its development, there would inevitably be future pressure to build only high-profit and therefore probably high-cost dwellings here, which would not serve the needs of a younger population of future residents.	The agents acting on behalf of the landowner consider this site to be financially viable. Results of the questionnaire carried out in 2017 showed that residents favoured developments that included more 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses with comments indicating that homes should be available for first time buyers and young families, as well as for older residents wishing to downsize and remain in the village. It is therefore incumbent upon the SG to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan offers sites that will allow for all these criteria to be met. The housing policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, which, if adopted, become enshrined in MKC planning policies, will not be supportive of large, expensive houses, as this is not what residents want.
3.	Development on Site 9 would be to the detriment of the visual impact looking from the east-west section of Church Walk, towards Folly Lane. The walker would now be faced with a modern Development with concomitant loss of banks and hedgerows (and therefore wildlife), which would detract from the other magnificent rural views from this section of Church Walk. Pedestrians do regularly stop here for the views.	There are magnificent rural views from all areas around North Crawley, sitting as it does atop the plateau. The far-reaching views, uninterrupted by modern development and the considerable heritage considerations associated with the Conservation Area and listed buildings, have posed one of the greatest challenges in finding suitable sites for development. The SG has endeavoured to find sites that are enclosed, small in size and have a minimum impact on the historic character of the village and the wider, open landscape. The design codes and policies for this site and all sites, will state that new dwellings should use materials and styles that are in keeping with a rural area. Some loss of hedgerow is inevitable to allow access, however, it will be policy to retain/replace and strengthen existing hedgerow, as much as possible.
4.	Development on Site 9 would make it more difficult to continue to resist infill between Church Walk and Folly Lane.	MKC refused application for infill in the back garden of a house between Church Walk and Folly Lane because of the substandard access in that particular location and because it was considered to be an inappropriate form of infill – this policy will not be affected by development on site NC9.

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<tr><td>5.</td><td>I would like to point out that site 9 has three (not two) TPOs for sycamore trees (the third being on the boundary with 8 Folly Lane – this tree is the responsibility of the landowner, not of 8 Folly Lane.</td><td>Thank you for pointing this out. The SG has queried this with MKC and there is indeed a further group TPO on all of the trees from the top of site NC9 and in front of the existing bungalows to the High Street.</td></tr>
<tr><td>6.</td><td>We don’t seem to be able to find any reference to the suitability of Site 13 in the plan update. Have we missed something? We can see 13a and 13b, but not 13.</td><td>Site NC13 was split into 2 smaller sites. The full assessment was of the whole of site NC13 and then consideration was given as to whether 2 smaller sites, NC13a and NC13b might work within it. The conclusion was that owing to the particular heritage and landscape constraints, no part of site NC13 was suitable.</td></tr>
<tr><td>7.</td><td>Can anything be done at all to limit the number of vehicles using Folly Lane as a rat-run to Cranfield? At peak times, (even during lockdown, floods and ice), there is far too much traffic using it as a short cut. The answer to us seems obvious. These are our thoughts:
Firstly, we would like to see the speed limit reduced from the national speed limit down to 30mph for the whole of Folly Lane as far as the junction at Wharley End.
Secondly a couple of speed humps or rumble strips between where the Site 13b on the neighbourhood plan is and Hurst End Farm would surely act as a deterrent to drivers in a hurry. It would also make it far less likely for Hurst End Farm traffic to access Folly Lane at the residential end.</td><td>The Parish Council can apply to the local Traffic Authority for a reduction in a speed limit but it is not an easy process and is subject to national as well as local policy. It is unlikely that the limit along the entirety of Folly Lane would be reduced. The latest information from the Transport Department can be found on this website: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-local-speed-limits
<table>
<tr><td>Speed limit (mph)</td><td>Where limit should apply:</td></tr>
<tr><td>60</td><td>Recommended for most high-quality strategic A and B roads with few bends, junctions or accesses.</td></tr>
<tr><td>50</td><td>Should be considered for lower quality A and B roads that may have a relatively high number of bends, junctions or accesses. Can also be considered where mean speeds are below 50 mph, so lower limit does not interfere with traffic flow.</td></tr>
<tr><td>40</td><td>Should be considered where there are many bends, junctions or accesses, substantial development, a strong environmental or landscape reason, or where there are considerable numbers of vulnerable road users.</td></tr>
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From this information, the Parish Council might have a case for asking for a reduction to 50mph but then there would have to be an investigation into how many collisions there had been over the previous few years, what the current mean speeds are and an assessment of the general use of the road. There would have to be 20 or more houses to consider a speed limit of 30mph.
With regard to speed bumps, again this is for the local traffic authority rather than the Parish Council but the current legislation states that road humps can be installed on roads with a speed limit of 30 mph or less. So, as it is unlikely that Folly Lane would be granted a speed limit of less than 50mph, the local traffic authority will not consider speed humps to be appropriate.

This information has been passed to the Parish Council for consideration.</td></tr>
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8.	The sites have been evaluated as suitable, available, or achievable. With this in mind I would question why the sites that were selected for the original neighbourhood plan have not been included. Just because there was opposition to some of the sites does not mean that they should not be included, as opposition is not a criterion that has been named – I daresay that there will be levels of opposition to any site included in the plan. Specifically, I refer to the extended area opposite Orchard Way (a smaller area has been proposed as site 4) and the Slipe (again, a smaller area has been proposed as site 6).	The key word here is 'available'. The SG can only consider land that the landowner has put forward. A reduced area for site NC4 was put forward by the landowner, based on a planning application that was made in December 2019 and subsequently withdrawn. The landowner is keen to work with the Neighbourhood Plan. Site NC6 is in separate landownership to that of the Slipe. The Slipe has not been presented as an area for development and so it has not been assessed. It is also important to acknowledge that the previous attempt to deliver a neighbourhood plan failed because of a perceived lack of consultation following changes to the size of the sites after the first period of consultation. The new SG is keen to ensure that account is taken of feedback received whether formally or informally.
9.	With regards to site 5, this has only been considered with access from Pound Lane – however is it not possible to consider access from Kilpin Green? I appreciate that this would require access across a corner of the recreation ground but given that access across designated green space has been considered for site 4 then this should also stand for site 5?	Access to site NC4 across the tree-lined verge is not acceptable to the SG because this area is designated as an Asset of Community Value. The landowners of site NC3 and site NC4 have agreed to work together to look at shared access through site NC3, thus avoiding damaging the tree lined verge. The Recreation Ground is an important green space that was gifted to the residents of North Crawley. It is a community asset, protected by a Trust Deed, and managed by the Institute Management Committee (IMC) for the benefit of all residents of North Crawley; it will be for the IMC to consider whether it is appropriate or even legal to allow development on part of this land. Access for site NC5 from Kilpin Green would set a precedent for nibbling away at green spaces in the village, something that the SG is keen not to do. Following this period of informal consultation, the SG will be considering the comments and suggestions from landowners and residents and will be exploring all options. The SG remains committed to an objective, criteria led decision making process.
10.	We live on the border of the village, we have noticed the increase in traffic ever since the new Cranfield estate was built. We agree with fighting site 7 as the traffic is bad enough as it is, without having more traffic to contend with. As for site 6, we agree with a possibility of three dwellings and no more, as long as they are in keeping with the surrounding properties.	The SG acknowledges that traffic is a concern for residents in all areas of the village; vehicular access and the impact of increased traffic movement is a consideration for all sites. The recent Conservation Area Review undertook a traffic assessment and concluded that "the traffic is not a constant or particularly troublesome presence but it does add a degree of noise and activity as traffic makes its way through the village." Notwithstanding this assessment by an external body, the SG is mindful that any development on site NC6 should pay particular attention to safe vehicular access. The expected housing capacity on Site NC6 is for 3 dwellings. It is important that the SG is able to justify the site density and we will be working with the landowner and planning consultants at AECOM to develop Design

		Codes for this site. This work will involve discussions about site density, vehicular access and also the particular requirement to work with designs and materials that will be in keeping with the Conservation Area.
11.	Thank you very much for the many hours spent meeting, discussing, analysing and communicating. The Update is very thorough and informative. My main comment is that I think that developing more land to the North of the village would lead to distinct lack of balance around the village centre. The exception being site 3 as development would replace a previous dwelling and would improve a derelict area.	The SG has explored all possibilities in trying to find sites that are suitable for development while maintaining the historic and rural characteristics of the landscape around the village. We sought, as much as possible, to ensure that development was spread around the village and understand your concerns about the apparent imbalance. We recognise that the majority of sites deemed potentially suitable areas for development are located to the north of the village. However, each site has been assessed on its individual merits against applicable local and national policy (hence, for example, Site NC5 to the north of the village has been assessed as unsuitable for development). In accordance with the results of the 2017 residents' questionnaire, the SG has made it a requirement that any and all proposed development is within easy walking distance of the village centre.
12.	Despite there having been massive show of feeling against the development of the landlocked site in Orchard Way, we were very disappointed to see that it is still included in the proposals despite the level of opposition. It still remains landlocked. I do not see that it is the responsibility of the SG to find access. I urge the Steering Group to remove the Orchard Way site to reflect village opinion and to preserve community cohesion.	Feedback from discussion with residents over the past 14 months has shown that opposition to site NC4 emerged when the size of the site was increased from the first draft to the second draft of the 2019 Neighbourhood Plan. Feedback thus far is that reverting to the smaller area with fewer houses is more agreeable. The SG has recognised the importance of the tree-lined verge and this will be protected by Green Space Policies within the Neighbourhood Plan. It is the responsibility of the SG to find sites that are suitable from a planning point of view; discussions with the landowners of site NC3 and site NC4 show a willingness to work together to create a single access point through site NC3. It is highly unlikely that the SG will be able to find sites for which there is no opposition at all. The SG has worked hard to remain as objective as possible by relying upon the professional advice from the independent consultants and MKC.
13.	The inclusion of site 2a is clearly a good thing, it's the only site in our opinion, that will not face opposition. If this goes ahead, together with Maslins Land and Orchard way, it will mean that most of the new development will be lumped together on one corner of the village.	This site too faces opposition, some residents feel that this area of open countryside should be protected. However, it offers a small site that is fully enclosed and is protected from over development because of its shape and size, as well as local and national policy that militate strongly against development of site NC2b. See response to number 11 regarding issue of balancing development.
14.	The plan doesn't seem to take into account, people's desire to have little bits of infill within the village rather than pushing everything beyond the settlement boundary.	As the map on page 3 of the leaflet shows, the settlement boundary is so tight around the village that there is little space for infill; this is not an option when looking to provide about 30 new houses and maintain the open, rural characteristics of our village.

15.	I don't understand why site 5 has been excluded on the grounds of unsuitability and site 9 included when Folly Lane carries far more daily traffic and pedestrians are hardly safe walking there, traffic is likely to increase as Cranfield airport continues its growth.	The SG recognises that there are parallels between the respective characteristics of many of the proposed sites. However, every site is unique and must be assessed based on all of its individual characteristics. MKC Highways Department stated that there is insufficient highway to provide safe vehicular and pedestrian access along Pound Lane. In addition, Pound Lane is a quiet lane, valued by residents as a safe place to walk. See response to number 1 regarding issue of accessibility for Site NC9.
16.	I am concerned that the majority of comments on the draft proposals will be dominated by nimbyism and wonder how the Steering Group is going to evaluate comments and contributions in an impartial manner.	The SG will consider all comments and assess them against the planning criteria that have been applied by the independent consultants. We are continuing to work with MKC planning and highways departments and the AECOM consultants to explore additional options and to support us in the process of site selection. The SG remains committed to an objective, criteria led decision making process. MKC, as the Planning Authority, will need to 'sign off' the plan and the Neighbourhood Plan Examiner will expect to see evidence that the process of selecting sites and developing policies is based on objective evidence and the process has been transparent and fair.
17.	Although this is clearly not the final document, it would be valuable if an emphasis was made on how the proposed developments benefitted the village as there is always the danger that developers would wish to construct expensive and most profitable houses that do not satisfy the needs of young families, especially when the SG recommends a smaller number of houses should be constructed on a site than has been requested by the site owner (e.g., site 3).	The final neighbourhood plan document will have a set of policies relating to design codes. We are currently working with landowners and independent consultants on these design codes for each of the proposed sites, which will consider such things as: site density; size of dwellings; acceptable materials; architectural styles; sustainable energy and drainage considerations. The housing Needs Assessment carried out in 2018 identified a need for 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes in the village; the Housing policies within the Neighbourhood Plan must align with the Housing Needs Assessment. The SG will make it clear in these policies that the 30 new dwellings should comprise a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses suitable for first time buyers and young families and also for older residents to downsize without having to leave the village.
18.	Site 1. The assessment is very negative about this site. However, factors that are not brought out in this assessment are that (i) although in open countryside, it is adjacent to the settlement boundary. (ii) It is closer to the centre of the village than many of the other sites under consideration. (iii) The existing houses along Chicheley Road are already prominent	The landscape issues for sites NC1, NC5 and NC7 relate to the size and the open nature of these fields. Large, open fields are considered to be sensitive to development and site NC1, on the edge of the plateau is considered to be particularly sensitive because of its elevated position. One of the outstanding landscape qualities of North Crawley is the far-reaching views from these high points; the independent consultants assessed site NC1 as unsuitable because of the significant potential for harm to a valuable landscape. This view is reinforced in the landscape sensitivity study document, which states that development should be sited away from the edge of the plateau; site NC1 is the most prominent site on the edge of the plateau.

	when approaching the village and are not particularly architecturally distinguished. How much worse would a single row of houses be, if designed to blend in with the environment? (iv) Many of the landscape arguments do not apply if the development were restricted to a single row of houses adjacent to Chicheley Road. Why did such an option (single row of houses) not receive a more favourable response in this draft plan?	It is important also to consider the longer term impact of developing in such a wide, open area. Currently, Chicheley Road provides a well defined edge to the settlement, once this boundary is breached, even for a single row of houses, what starts out as a small development can be easily enlarged and the potential for large scale development in the future is much greater.
19.	Site 2a and 2b. The evaluation of this site appears to be unduly favourable in the draft proposals and full account has not been taken of the following: (i) The first sentence of the assessment should state that the site is in open countryside (like site 1), rather than leaving this to the end of the assessment. (ii) The site is the furthest away from the centre of the village (is this not an important criterion?) and further accentuates the sprawl of the village to the North. (iii) Most residents of Little Crawley would not recognize coalescence with the village as an important advantage, and indeed if coalescence is a priority for the SG, there are significant advantages that are not mentioned in other sites in coalescing to Brook End and Folly Lane. (iv) The site boundary with Orchard Way appears to represent a natural break to the development of the village to the North so it is difficult to see why the SG made such favourable comments about this site.	The criteria in the summary for each site are not ranked in order of importance. All of the sites lie outside the settlement boundary and so, by definition are in open countryside. There is a distinction between the main criteria, and the various factors that need to be considered when assessing any given site against those criteria. AECOM have clarified that they have not necessarily referred to certain factors for each site in the summary, particularly if they were less significant or more susceptible to mitigation. Direct comparisons between sites can be made using the site assessment proformas in the appendix. The distance from the village is an important criterion and while this site is furthest from the centre of the village it is not considered to be too far for pedestrians to walk to the local amenities. It is recognised that this site, along with sites NC3 and NC4, is located to the north of the village. These sites have been considered suitable by the independent consultants based on planning criteria, (hence, for example, Site NC5 to the north of the village has been assessed as unsuitable for development). In accordance with the results of the 2017 residents' questionnaire, the SG has made it a requirement that any and all proposed development is within easy walking distance of the village centre. With regard to coalescence, the SG is keen to ensure that Little Crawley retains its separation from North Crawley; the SG does not consider coalescence to be an advantage. Little Crawley's heritage as a hamlet, separate to North Crawley is considered an important characteristic and the identification of Site NC2b as a buffer between the two settlements will be written into the neighbourhood plan policies. One of the findings from the questionnaire carried out in 2017 was that residents did not want to see ribbon development, or coalescence, towards the various outlying areas. The site was considered suitable by the independent consultants owing to its proximity to the settlement boundary; good vehicular and pedestrian access and because it is adequately screened within the environment. All sites outside the existing settlement boundary appear to disrupt the natural break between the developed area and the open countryside. However, not all sites were found to have a defensible

	(v) Building 15 houses on a site that is suitable for 30 implies that the houses will be larger and unsuitable for village families. (vi) The most significant advantage of this site is that it appears to have the lowest 'NIMBY' profile, but that alone does not justify the favourable response in the draft proposals.	boundary to further development, or to relate well to the existing form of the village and surrounding countryside. Sites NC2a, NC3, and NC4 were considered by the independent consultants to be more suitable than other sites. The report recommends 30 houses for site NC2a, however, 30 dwellings is the potential development capacity: not a target. Results of the questionnaire carried out in 2017 showed that residents would prefer to have a few smaller developments spread around the village, rather than one large development on one site, it was also made clear that some type of affordable housing would be beneficial to allow young people a chance to remain in the village. A development of 15 houses will allow for some lower cost, 2 bed starter homes to be included, it will also ensure that the Public Right of Way is maintained and green buffers and an area for wildlife are incorporated into the development. These factors will be written into the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. There was no criterion that considered the NIMBY profile of a site. Although the SG did consider impact on neighbours as a criterion in the early stages of assessment, the independent consultants advised that this was not a planning criterion and so while it may help to rank sites, it could not be used to decide whether or not they were suitable on planning grounds. The independent consultants have used only objective criteria in their assessments.
20.	Site 3 (Maslin's): I agree with this assessment, but should the development of this site not be undertaken in conjunction with site 4?	The SG has gained agreement in principle from the landowners of sites NC3 and NC4 to work together to secure access for Site NC4.
21.	Site 4 (Orchard Way): To preserve the amenity value of the wide verge and mature trees, I think the SG should reserve approval of this site unless the landowner can demonstrate access through Site 3. As well as incumbering residents of Orchard Way with a building development, it is unfair also to take away the amenity value of part of the current strip of land registered to the Parish Council.	The verge is designated as an Asset of Community Value and it will be included in the Neighbourhood Plan as Green Space. This is supported by the Parish Council. The provision of a suitable point of access would need to be demonstrated as part of a planning application before development went ahead, and this is something that can also be stipulated in a Site Allocation policy i.e. access would need to be demonstrated that did not impact on the Parish Council owned land.
22.	Site 5 (Pound Lane): I am assuming that like Site 4, this is Grade 4 Poor Agricultural Land? I do not understand the objections of the MK Traffic and Development Officer as being the principal reason for rejecting this development and wonder if a proper assessment has	The Highways Department has assessed this as unsuitable owing to a lack of highway and the inability to create suitable safe pedestrian access. The Highways department does not consider access across the unlit recreation ground to be suitable pedestrian access.

	been undertaken taking into account of the following: (i) A small development (single row of houses adjacent to the Rec) is not going to substantially increase the traffic density along Pound Lane. (ii) It is only the first couple of hundred metres of Pound Lane that would be affected. (iii) The Council has previously approved an expansion of several new dwellings at the bottom of Pound Lane. (ii) Mitigation could be provided by the construction of a passing space if judged necessary. (iii) The traffic problems appear to be far less serious than those posed by the development of the Folly Lane sites 9, 10 or 11.	Pound Lane is valued by residents as a quiet lane, which, owing to the lack of through traffic and sparse, scattered dwellings, is relatively safe for walking. The 'new' dwellings at the bottom of Pound Lane already existed, either as smaller properties or as agricultural buildings. Planning to renovate or convert these existing buildings was granted 20 years ago, assessments are made on current planning policy.
23.	Site 6: Is the proposal for a terrace-type development (to match the adjacent terrace), for which more than three dwellings might be appropriate?	The SG is working with the landowners and the independent consultants to develop Design Codes for site NC6, we will take advice as to a suitable housing density and type of housing for this location in the conservation area. Additional key considerations when considering a suitable density are vehicular access and space for off street parking.
24.	Site 7 Church Farm Field. The boundaries of this site appear to have been selected to ensure automatic rejection (as summarized in the assessment). But why was not an alternative proposal evaluated, comprising dwellings in Church Farm Field, parallel with the boundary of the Slype – with the Slype allocated as a village amenity? This option appears to be a serious omission from the draft plan. Such a development would have the significant advantage of being the closest to the centre of the village.	The independent consultants were sent 3 potential plans, provided by the landowner, which ranged from 9 to 15 dwellings with orientations from North to South and East to West, partly adjacent to the Slipe. The consultants judged development within this field to be unsuitable owing to its significant size and the lack of a defensible boundary (such as a road, a river or a railway line, for example), meaning that, as in site NC1, it would open up the wider landscape to future development. They considered that the site is outside the existing settlement boundary and poorly related to the existing pattern of development. The consultants were also informed that the landowner was prepared to offer the Slipe to the Parish Council as Green Space for use by the community in perpetuity, in exchange for viable development. This is not a planning consideration and so when assessing the site this was not considered as a criterion, the reason being that it may make Site NC7 more palatable to some, but it does not make it more suitable from a planning perspective. The Slipe, with its public right of way, will continue to lie outside the settlement boundary and so it will continue to be protected as open countryside under MKC Planning Policy DS1. The SG consulted with senior planners at MKC to discuss the gift of the Slipe and were advised not to favour one landowner over another in making decisions about whether sites were suitable.
25.	Site 8 Field South of Church Walk. 'Development might dilute the agricultural character of this area'.	It is true that all sites sit in open countryside and the term agricultural character applies to all sites. The consultants considered this to be more significant on some sites than others. The land on Site NC8 is used for grazing and is managed for agricultural purposes.

	But surely this comment applies to other sites, especially site 2.	Site NC8 also has significant heritage constraints; it sits opposite Church Walk, adjacent to the Conservation Area and is within the setting of the Grade 1 listed Church of St Firmins. Site NC2a is agricultural land but it is not managed for agricultural purposes. It is well enclosed and provides a more contained site than site NC8, for example. It is also adjacent to Chicheley Road, which provides appropriate vehicular access.
26.	Site 6 on the High Street, surrounded by dwellings of an historic character and some quite typical for North Crawley's architectural style, has been judged suitable for up to 3 dwellings, and personally I would think that a semi-detached house, following on from Kit's terrace at the Cranfield side of the village, and in the same style would be suitable, which would also then make it possible to retain some of the space now used as allotments. A single dwelling on the opposite end of the row as an infill between the terrace and the semi-detached dwelling, and replicating that style would then complete the site. Exits onto the High Street, however, should be extremely limited, considering the already existing traffic congestions in the morning and evening rush hours. Also, it would be desirable to retain the existing wood-clad garage building in situ, since it is now attractive and well-weathered, making a pleasant and ideal construction leading from countryside into the historic part of the built-up village. I furthermore also strongly agree with the guidance on this area in the recent Conservation Area Review. I think one of the most important considerations must be to strictly limit exits from dwelling onto the High Street in order to not have increased traffic jams as it is difficult enough in the mornings and evenings to endure the slaloms from gaps between parked cars in order to negotiate the main road and not make it infinitely worse.	The SG is working with the landowner and the Design Consultants to draw up plan proposals and Design Codes for Site NC6. In considering the density of housing there are a number of factors to take into account, including vehicular access and off-street parking, and we will be taking advice from the consultants as to the most viable and suitable options. The Design consultants have been asked to look at how access can be created to limit the impact of additional traffic on the High Street, however, a small development of about 3 houses will not have a significant impact on traffic movement in this area.

27.	I am concerned that none of the NPSG live south of the High Street. I appreciate that this is the fault of the residents that live in that part of the village. But I am worried that the problems listed are not fully appreciated by those who do not live in the vicinity of The Folly Lane sites. I also feel strongly that before the residents of the village are asked to vote on their preference for sites that we are given the opportunity to discuss the findings of the consultant and the SG at an open forum.	The SG feels that it has benefited from including members from multiple parts of the parish. This has included the High Street, Kilpin Green, the conservation area, and the hamlets. In any case, however, the SG has done its utmost to be objective and, crucially, also engaged independent consultants to assess the potential development sites. The SG has also engaged fully with the consultants, with the Highways Department and with Milton Keynes Planning Department to ensure that all options are explored, so as not to show favour to one area of the village over another. The SG has explored the options of an open forum but in the current situation of holding virtual meetings, this would not be an inclusive event for those residents who cannot access online forums. The SG is hopeful that with restrictions beginning to be eased we will be able to hold an open day in the Institute in the summer. This will allow a fair chance for all residents to attend to view the proposals and speak to members of the SG before the draft Neighbourhood Plan is distributed.
28.	The NP has to be considered as a long-term strategy for controlled, sympathetic growth of the village over time. Not just a short-term fix to avoid imminent or future speculative development. The NP is intended to provide a 15 year roadmap for such growth, to be reviewed every 5 years. As such, when selecting appropriate sites for development this time around the NP needs to be forward looking to anticipated expansion over the next few decades. Otherwise, we will go through similar pain when a new NP needs to be agreed in the future. When reflecting on the current sites available, focus should be given to which sites could offer sustainable, controlled growth in years to come, rather than just meeting a quota of 35 dwellings for this time around. As is evident from the current available sites, very few fall into this category.	The SG has been tasked with finding sites for about 30 new dwellings that will provide sustainable, managed growth over a period of 15 years. Rather than viewing the allocation of housing in the Neighbourhood Plan as a short term fix to avoid speculative development, the SG considers that 10% growth over the next 15 years will safeguard the village community and its facilities by enabling young people and young families to move into or remain in the village and older members of the community to downsize, thus freeing up existing family homes. Within the next 10 years, more than 5,000 houses will be built between the M1 and Newport Pagnell and a further 1,000 houses are planned for the land at Tickford Fields; while the land designated for building in Milton Keynes does not include North Crawley the impact on the village will be significant. There will be increased traffic and there will also be a large amount of affordable, family housing that is local to North Crawley and will be attractive to those who cannot afford the premium price of a village property. It is important that the Neighbourhood Plan provides sufficient properties to ensure the sustainability of the village and is able to sell those properties, given the mass of more affordable housing within easy reach of the village. Plan:MK does not specify a quantum of housing for North Crawley, and as such, MKC does not expect the Parish Council to provide any more dwellings than will be specified in the Neighbourhood Plan. The figure of 30 to 35 houses came from the response by residents to the 2017 questionnaire, where 54% of residents agreed or agreed strongly that development should be limited to ‘no more than 35 [houses[in total’. Analysis of the results of the 2017 questionnaire highlights that residents value: access to public green spaces and footpaths; open countryside; field patterns and hedgerows; quiet, small country lanes and a sense of belonging to a community. All of these aspects of rural living are under threat if we do not do all we can to

		protect the open spaces around our village. Having a Neighbourhood Plan will strengthen the ability of the Parish Council to oppose any development outside of the allocated sites and will go some way towards ensuring that North Crawley remains a village.
29.	I have now studied the draft Village Plan. Although it largely follows the earlier version I think that, generally speaking, it is well considered and worthy of taking forward. Congratulations to all those who have put it together. In the "What happens next" section on page 18 is the comment "the final sites must allow for the development of about 30 to 35 dwellings". When the questionnaire was completed some years ago, the villagers had felt under threat from various possibilities emanating from Milton Keynes Council. These appeared to include the absorption of the village into the town of Milton Keynes or the creation of growth villages within the Council area, including North Crawley. The original village plan was to be a defence against these threats. I now understand that these threats no longer exist (at least for the immediate future). If I am right, what is the necessity for providing for 30 to 35 dwellings? However, I am in favour of some low cost housing being provided as I feel that the influx of younger people would help to give fresh impetus to us. I assume that steps would be taken to ensure that any planning consents would provide for such low cost housing.	MKC's Local Plan, known as Plan:MK, sets out the vision and framework for how Milton Keynes will develop. Local plans, together with any neighbourhood plans that have been made (adopted), are the starting-point for considering whether planning applications can be approved. Rural villages are expected to contribute to the Milton Keynes housing policies through Neighbourhood Plans. Milton Keynes is set to double in size over the next 30 years, there will be increasing pressure on rural areas to provide land for housing development. This is happening at a time when planning law is changing to make it easier for developers to build and so the need for a Neighbourhood Plan has never been greater. A Neighbourhood Plan will give some control for a period of 15 years, over where development will take place and the kind of development that will be allowed. The figure of 30 to 35 new dwellings over the next 15 years was considered appropriate to allow for 10% growth of our community. This is considered to be sustainable growth, in that it is not so big that it will swamp our small village but it allows the community and the facilities that rely on it to thrive. MKC policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) expect a proportion of housing to be affordable on developments of more than 10 houses, below that number there is no expectation that a developer would incorporate affordable housing. The definition of affordable housing within the NPPF is wide and includes social housing, as well as private rental and affordable starter homes. Residents have stated that social housing is not appropriate in the village and the previous SG consulted with social housing providers who agreed that the scale of development in the village was not appropriate for this type of affordable housing. MKC policies on affordable housing within Plan:MK specify that there are two types of affordable housing that are acceptable: 1. affordable rent provision, provided at a range of rent levels up to 80% of market rents, including a provision for properties at a level equivalent to social rent.

		2. Low Cost Home Ownership options (shared ownership) so as to widen opportunities for home ownership and support those households who wish to move out of affordable rent into home ownership. Feedback from residents is that additional rental properties are not required in North Crawley, as these tend to lead to a more transient population, which does not lend itself to strengthening the community. It is the view of the SG that below-market-price starter homes would be a more suitable type of affordable housing, however, MKC has informed the SG that this is not included in the tenure mix of Plan:MK policy HN2. We are currently consulting with MKC as to how we might incorporate affordable housing into the NP policies.
	I am not fully in the picture so far as the comments about access to Site 4 are about. I understand that the Parish Council own the land between Orchard Way and the site. If this is the only possible access then, under the Stokes v Cambridgeshire County Council decision, the land has considerable value, possible one third of the value of the site with the benefit of planning consent. Of course, if alternative access could be obtained, this would no longer be relevant. It has been mentioned to me that the land could be designated as village green.	See answer to number 21.
	Leading on to Site 2a and 2b I cannot quite follow the comment "full development of the site will significantly reduce the gap between the two settlements and lead to coalescence". Why should the settlements not be joined up?	Little Crawley is a hamlet in its own right, separate to North Crawley. This separation forms part of the heritage of the area and it is important that we do not diminish the heritage characteristics of the Parish through unsympathetic development. Maintaining separation by not developing site 2b and incorporating green buffers into the northern boundary of NC2a will protect Little Crawley from over development.
	As I said at the outset, I think that the SG are to be thanked for their hard work, especially during the difficulties of Covid.	All comments are valued, thank you.

	I may have misunderstood certain points. If so I apologise. But I hope that my comments will be considered by the group.	
30.	I agree mostly with the proposed five sites for development. You can sense a but! I feel that none of these sites should detract from the current situation of existing properties. Again it's the access to site 4. As you say in the pamphlet it is separated from Orchard Way by a strip of land in public ownership, where a line of semi-mature trees is present and identified as an asset of community value. This strip of land benefits the route home to most residents in the village and it is beautiful right now with spring flowers (planted by residents) and is full of life with birds and their boxes. Also in residence recently a hedgehog, I guess could be more than one, seen on our daily walk. This route is enjoyed by many who, for one reason or another, don't want to cross the fields. Have the SG considered using one small site to access a larger one, eg site 12 with access via site 13b. This would allow a clear wide access from Folly Lane and with a smaller footway onto Folly Lane at the opposite end of the site.	See response to numbers 9 and 21 regarding the verge on Orchard Way. The protection of the existing ecology will be taken into consideration in the site allocation policies, the design of new development and through the planning application process. The majority of sites on Folly Lane have been considered unsuitable owing to lack of vehicular access and the general lack of capacity for Folly Lane to absorb more than small scale development. Site NC9 was considered marginally suitable on the understanding that no further development of sites on Folly Lane would come forward.
31.	We appreciate all the time & hard work being put in from the Steering Group & we're in complete agreement that having a Neighbourhood Plan is extremely important for the village & it's future. It's really important that this plan gets through this time. Having seen there was a distinctive divide at the last Steering Group meeting (5 to 3 with 1 abstention) about whether those sites deemed "suitable" by	The issue of which sites are potentially suitable for development and which are not is, as you rightly observe, a divisive issue and one that the Steering Group has struggled with, both before and after engaging AECOM. The Steering Group is doing its utmost to be objective and make decisions based on planning law and policy

	AECOM were the ones to be putting forward as the options to vote on for residents, I feel this is something that should be highlighted/ clarified/discussed further with the village. Noted that getting some independent advice was particularly important this time round following the previous rejected plan & some of the rumoured reasons for this. But I assume the reason there wasn't a unanimous vote at the last Steering Group meeting was that others are in agreement that there is still room for challenge & to explore further options/opportunities to potentially make a currently deemed "unsuitable" site a "suitable" option. I read that the "suitable" sites will be put to village vote in March. The pamphlet we have received doesn't really suggest there could be any room for challenge before the vote – is this right or is it still open?	and independent evidence. To that end, as well as visiting, assessing and discussing each of the potential development sites for ourselves, we have entrusted independent consultants to carry out site assessments. We have debated their findings, applying our own collective knowledge and experience, and where necessary challenged these findings. We consulted further with the planning and highways departments at Milton Keynes Council, and were assured that AECOM's methodology was robust and that their conclusions raise no concerns. Finally, to ensure maximum scrutiny and accountability, we obtained an extension of this support in order to hold a further round of consultation with AECOM, having first shared with them the feedback of residents and landowners. These steps have elicited several clarifications and amendments that were vital for the Steering Group and for residents of the village, but the overarching findings remain the same. The AECOM assessments are based on local and national planning law and policy. In practice, those laws and policies can produce a definitive answer in some circumstances, whilst requiring a judgement call to be made in others. Whilst not all members of the Steering Group have agreed with all of the report's findings, the Steering Group and Milton Keynes Council are satisfied that they have been carried out by experienced professionals, and every effort has been made to test those findings and to ensure they are thoroughly and appropriately explained. The Steering Group also recognises that it is unlikely to achieve unanimity on the suitability of any given site; either with or without professional expertise. The Steering Group is at liberty to reject the professional advice it has received. However, to treat as potentially suitable those sites which have been assessed as currently unsuitable would be an exercise in rejecting planning guidance. Regarding the matter of "balance" across the village, please refer to the answer for comment 11. The Neighbourhood Plan must present sites that are viable and that comply with Milton Keynes Council planning and highways policies, to go against those will see the proposed Neighbourhood Plan rejected by the Council-appointed Independent Examiner, without even being put to a referendum. The Steering Group was expecting, and actively sought, to have more sites potentially suitable for development than were actually required. On that basis, it was always the intention to invite residents to rank those sites according to where they felt future development ought to be. Regrettably, following the aforesaid process, a significant number of the assessed sites have been found to be unsuitable, and we are left with just enough suitable sites to provide the quantum of housing that the Steering Group was tasked with allocating in the Neighbourhood Plan, i.e. about 30 houses, and so there is little room for prioritising sites. We are

		however, continuing to explore how we can ensure meaningful engagement with residents prior to the draft plan being consulted upon.
32.	I believe the site assessment criteria has not been consistently applied to provide suitable/not suitable sites. There should remain the opportunity for further review and questioning, as without it I think several landowners would have justification to feel that their plots have been left out unfairly. Particular reference to the site 2a and site 7 findings, when looked at comparatively. Without out further review, this plan will have a majority of sites from the previous failed one. Also, with reference to comments on "defensible boundaries", if they can be created in one open field then they can surely be created in all? So conclusions regarding a complete field size being used are irrelevant aren't they?	The SG has had extensive discussions with the consultants and we continue to work with them with regard to site allocation. We are also actively engaging with landowners, including those who own sites that have been assessed as unsuitable. The site assessment report provides a robust and objective evidence base on which to justify the final site allocations. Colleagues in Milton Keynes Council Planning Department have evaluated the site assessment report and are of the view that AECOM have produced a professional report; they support the approach taken by AECOM and confirm that their methodology has evaluated sites in an objective way. The defensible boundaries issue is something that we have discussed with MKC and raised again with the consultants. AECOM have explained that a planning consideration is whether a development relates well to its surroundings. The lack of a defensible boundary will very rarely be the only reason why a site is unsuitable for development. If there is a defined boundary to a development, e.g. something that delineates the settlement edge, that can be seen as a defensible boundary. These boundaries are clear and more easily explained when there is a road, railway or river forming the boundary. There are no objective criteria for defensible boundaries outside of these physical constraints but there is a great deal of planning policy that guides the view on the potential adverse impact of development on land without these physical constraints, especially the potential to "unlock" land for future development (such as with sites 1 and 7). Developments on either of these sites could be the harbinger of significant additional development at a later date. Once a boundary is breached (and other policies overridden) it is easier for development to continue into open countryside. The SG recognises that there are parallels between the respective characteristics of many of the proposed sites. However, every site is unique and must be assessed based on all of its individual characteristics. Site 7 is not connected to the settlement boundary; similar to Site 1, it is a large and entirely open field, risking significant additional development in the future; it is exposed to both the open countryside, the conservation area, and multiple listed buildings; and its development would be poorly related to the development pattern of the village.

	I would suggest that the information regarding "retrospective developments" and the possibility of those being added to a plan, be made clear to the village.	Site 2a has a defensible boundary in Site 2b, this provides a boundary to resist further development because there are planning guidelines that strongly militate against coalescence and so preventing Little Crawley and North Crawley from joining up is a strong defence; similarly, there are heritage arguments against any development beyond the boundary of 2a because of the impact this would have on the setting of Moat Farm. The Neighbourhood Plan can include in its housing allocation all houses built since the start of the plan making process, in this case 2018. There is currently one house on Chicheley Road that can be included in the allocation, additionally, the house that has been approved on Folly Lane will be included, the SG is not aware of any other houses built in the last few years that can be included. The Neighbourhood plan will contain a windfall & Infill policy that will account for a small number of houses in the allocation over the 15 year period of the plan.
33.	My point refers to the original questionnaire with regards to the villages preference that any site should not have more than 5 dwellings on it so as not to change the character of the village e.g. 15 dwellings on site 2a. As well as sites 3 and 4, in addition to site 2a would feel like one large development in itself.	Results of the questionnaire did find that residents would prefer smaller numbers of houses on suitable sites, it also found that residents would like some affordable or low cost housing. In order to incorporate affordable housing a development must include more than 10 houses. The Neighbourhood Plan is aiming to incorporate as many 2 and 3 bedroom houses as possible in the allocation, a site of more than 10 houses is more likely to include the lower cost housing that is required. An important aspect of the design codes work that is currently being carried out is to ensure that trees and hedgerows are retained and strengthened, as far as possible and each development will be required to incorporate green buffers. The aim is to ensure that development is contained and softened to avoid the impression of a large development. The Steering Group acknowledges that the questionnaire indicated some preference for clusters of 5-6 houses spread around the Parish of North Crawley, as well as some preference for 30-35 dwellings in total. Planning policy effectively precludes development anywhere that is not within or proximate to the settlement boundary of the village of North Crawley. There are not enough smaller-scale sites within or near the settlement boundaries to achieve both of these objectives. Other sites have been deemed unsuitable in part because of their significantly greater size and risk of unabated future incursion into the open countryside.
34.	Following circulation of the North Crawley neighbourhood plan update February 2021 we would like to offer the following comments on the sites which have been identified as suitable for development by the steering group. Site 3: Maslin Land on Orchard Way and site 4 Orchard Way itself – we would agree with the conclusion that both the sites are suitable and	

	certainly given the building of the Kilpin Green in Orchard Way in the 1970s this has the best road amenities and is consistent with the development direction of the village. Site 2a Chicheley Road - whilst we feel the nature of the particular site is very Rural and of natural significance as well as having an abundance of natural habitat which would be of a loss to the village it is feasible to see that this would be a continuation of the development from Orchard Way and therefore reluctantly would possibly be sensible. Site 6 High Street – this was on the previous proposed village plan and whilst it is only a small site may offer the opportunity for affordable homes on a small scale which could possibly include some form of covenant to prevent the properties being extended and then sold at a premium.	The design codes policy for site NC2a will specify that the Public Right of Way should be protected and that an area at the South of the site, currently containing a small copse of trees, should be retained as a wildlife area. The SG is currently in discussions with the landowner and with the independent consultants to agree design codes for this site that will ensure that it is in keeping with the conservation area and also allows space for off street parking. We are currently exploring how to ensure that houses are protected from being extended and sold off at a premium, and will continue to share our findings with residents.
35.	The report states the NC5 development "would elongate the village to the northeast, depart from the nucleated historic settlement pattern of the village. Development of the site is likely to change the landscape character of this area and will be contrary to Policy NE5 of Plan:MK." Whereas, site NC2a (Lower Croft Field, Chicheley Road) extends equally as far north west but appears not to have these detriments. Why the inconsistency?	Site NC2a is a contained site, with a defined and defensible boundary (see answer to 32). It sits lower on the plateau than site NC5, which is in a more prominent position when viewed from Pound Lane and from Gog Lane. Site NC2a is adjacent to Chicheley Road, providing good access and directly adjacent to modern development on Orchard Way, which defines the landscape character of this area. Site NC5, however, is on a single track lane with no safe pedestrian access (as defined in MKC highways policies) it appears removed from the built up area because of the more rural landscape character and the sporadic nature of dwellings along Pound Lane. The report acknowledges that the nucleated form of the village would be elongated northwards if development continued into Site 2b. This is one of several reasons why Site 2b is not considered suitable for development and, in conjunction with a number of planning policies (see answer to 32), also helps to enforce the defensible northern boundary of Site 2a.
36.	Site 7 – Church Farm Field - Cranfield Road	

	Not having an existing 'defensible barrier' to the south and west should not be insurmountable. Why is it not possible to build one as part of the defined development plan? For example, plant a new tree line, or add a new hedgerow. (We should be looking for solutions and not just highlighting problems.) Could The Slype be added within the Settlement Boundary? Thereby making it possible for a reduced site allocation to run adjacent to The Slype in an east-west orientation, making the site adjacent to the (new) settlement boundary.	The lack of a defensible boundary will very rarely be the only reason why a site is unsuitable for development (see answer to 32). A new tree line or hedgerow does not in itself provide a defensible boundary. Policies such as those that relate to the landscape, the relationship with the existing settlement, and any heritage considerations are the defence against sprawling development into open countryside. Where a site has constraints that would need to be and can be resolved or mitigated, it is potentially appropriate for allocation. This is the case with all of the amber-rated sites. The assessment of a site as unsuitable (i.e. red) means that there are constraints that preclude development altogether or there are a large number of other constraints, which indicate that the site is unsuitable. AECOM's assessments are based on a thorough knowledge of planning law and policy. They have explained to the Steering Group that they would only mark a proposed site as red where it is not suitable for development and, having been challenged on this point specifically (see answer to 31), they remain confident that the red-rated sites, including Site 7, are not suitable for development. Regarding the Slipe, please refer to the answer for comment 24. The settlement boundary provides protection as long as the local plan policies continue to recognise that all land outside the settlement boundary is open countryside. The issue with Site 7 and also with Site 1 is that the natural edge to those fields is a long way from the existing settlement edge. Developments on either of these sites could be the harbinger of significant additional development at a later date. Once a boundary is breached it is easier for development to continue into open countryside. The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to resist larger scale, speculative development, and not to open up the landscape for this to become a reality.