



Statement of consultation and  
Summary of the responses to consultation  
on the proposed new Loughton Conservation Area Statement

December 2013

## Introduction

In 2012, Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council (in informal partnership/collaboration with Milton Keynes Council) commissioned a review of the Conservation Area Statement for the Loughton Conservation Area. The work was carried out by a local architect, Peter Howard. He consulted with the Parish Council on the drafting. Significant input was also obtained from Simon Peart (Conservation and Archeology Manager) and Martin Ellison (Senior Planning Officer, Conservation & Archeology) both of Milton Keynes Council.

A meeting was also held with the Chief Executive and Properties Director of the Parks Trust to discuss the proposals at a draft stage – where they indicated they were broadly supportive of the initiative and (in particular) did not object to the extension of the Conservation Area to include their two properties (the equestrian centre and the paddock near Lucy Lane)

The draft for consultation was finalised in May 2013 and in early June 2013 a consultation with local residents and stakeholders was launched on the proposals. A copy of the 29-page draft for consultation is at Appendix 1 of this document.

This document first describes the method of the local consultation and then describes the outcome of the consultation.

### 1. The consultation.

Several hundred copies of the consultation document were colour printed and spiral bound, so that a copy could be provided to every dwelling in the existing Conservation Area and the proposed new extended Conservation Area and to all the key stakeholders.

Five key consultation questions were identified and appear on page 28 of the consultation document. These are :-

1. Do you agree it would be beneficial for Loughton if this new Conservation Area statement replaced the existing statement adopted in 1978?
2. Should the present conservation area be extended, as described in paragraphs 1.36 – 1.39?
3. Are there any additional aspects of the character of the Conservation area which should be included in the new Conservation Area statement? Please explain your reasons for suggesting these should be included.
4. Should the conservation area be subject to an Article 4(2) Direction made under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as described in paragraphs 3.17 – 3.19?
5. Are there any statements in the proposed Conservation Area statement which you disagree with? If so please say what these are and give the reasons for your view.

A hard copy questionnaire was devised to accompany the consultation document. This questionnaire was delivered by hand by the Parish Clerk with an explanatory covering letter.

The recipients therefore received the consultation document with the hard copy questionnaire for return and with the covering explanatory letter.

A copy of the explanatory covering letter is at page 1 & 2 of Appendix 2.

A copy of the hard copy consultation questionnaire is at pages 3 & 4 of Appendix 2.

The covering letter explained to residents/stakeholders the purpose of the consultation and the timescale for responding and provided additional background by setting out the existing Conservation Area statement.

One issue regarding the questionnaire was whether to include a requirement to complete the name and address of the respondent, or whether to obtain feedback on an anonymous basis. It was decided to require the respondent to give their name and address as it was considered this would assist in the interpretation of the feedback. Also it was considered the feedback was likely to be more substantive if it had to be associated with the name of the respondent. It was not thought this was likely to inhibit any genuine responses to the consultation.

## 2. The Consultees

As set out on page 28 of the consultation document, the consultees identified were as follows :-

- 1) All residents, property owners and tenants within the proposed enlarged conservation area – including those roads such as Whitworth Lane bordering the new extended area although just outside it.
- 2) English Heritage SE Region
- 3) MP for Loughton
- 4) Milton Keynes Council Local Members for Loughton
- 5) Development Control Committee Members
- 6) Strategic Directors and relevant Heads of Services
- 7) Libraries
- 8) Loughton Parish Council All Councillors
- 9) Adjacent Parish Councils
  - Shenley Church End
  - Abbey Hill
  - Bradwell
  - Central Milton Keynes
  - Campbell Park
  - Woughton
  - Shenley Brook End
- 10) All Saint's Church Loughton Churchwardens

- 11) Loughton Baptist Church
- 12) The Parks Trust
- 13) SaferMK Community Safety Manager
- 14) MK Heritage Association

### 3. Consultation methodology

All of the above consultees were sent a printed copy of the consultation document. They were all (except the libraries) delivered under cover of the covering letter and with the consultation questionnaire. The covering letter informed the recipient that the consultation was intended to close at the end of July 2013. Local residents and members of the Parish Council had their copy delivered by hand. All the other consultees received their copied by post.

The tenant of the Equestrian Centre, Mr Mitchell, was sent a copy of the consultation document and the questionnaire under cover of a personal letter from the Chair of the Parish Council and suggesting a meeting would be possible if it was desired.

In addition to hard copies of the document, the consultation document was published on the Parish website. A low-res pdf file was posted on the website enabling easy download. The publication of document on the website was promoted in a number of ways:-

- A prominent notice about the conservation area review was published on the home page of the Parish website with a link to the information and document within the site
- The ongoing Conservation Area review process was mentioned in the Parish newsletter which was delivered to all homes in Loughton & Great Holm in October 2012 and April 2013. The April piece included the maps from the document showing the proposed changes to the extent of the Conservation Area and referred readers to the Parish website for further information.
- The monthly email updates using mailchimp in June and July 2013 sent by the Parish to its 200+ email address list prominently featured the conservation area review and included hyperlinks
- The Parish Council twitter account (400+ followers) tweeted the link to the Conservation Review pages
- An email was sent to MK News and MK Citizen newspapers about the Conservation Area review and with hyperlinks to the consultation document. Unfortunately this did not result in any coverage

The publications above were overall successful in that the consultation document has been the most downloaded document from the Parish Council website – indicating a good deal of local awareness.

The internet was also used to supplement the paper consultation questionnaire through an online survey using the tool [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). This system was used to replicate the paper questionnaire by providing the 5 questions and an opportunity to complete answers online. In addition there was also the requirement to add the name and address of the

responder and also to indicate whether the responder lives within the Conservation Area or outside it, whether in Loughton, Great Holm or outside of the Parish. The use of an internet system of responding was offered to local residents as it was considered some responders would be more ready to respond online rather than to complete the paper questionnaire and to return it by hand or post.

#### 4. The Public Meeting

The letter to residents enclosing the consultation document included notice of and an invitation for residents to attend a public meeting at Loughton Memorial Hall, Bradwell Road, Loughton with Peter Howard and the members of the Parish Council to discuss the consultation. The public meeting was held at 7.30pm on Monday 17th of June 2013. A number of local residents attended and questions were raised on the document and there was a discussion between Peter Howard and all the Members of the Parish Council.

There was a unanimous consensus amongst all those attending the public meeting that the new Conservation statement would be of benefit to the area. There was strong support for both the proposed extension of the Conservation Area and also the making of an Article 4(2) direction.

There was some criticism from Councillor Dransfield to the map showing the local context of the Conservation Area on page 2 of the document. It was suggested that the map was somewhat distorted and not very informative. Peter Howard accepted that this map could be improved. He had adopted it from another MK Council publication. He would consider this in the final version.

Councillor Sargent queried whether the limits of the Conservation Area could be extended further – for example to include more of the linear park, the stepping stones in the Loughton brook and the paddock off Lincelade Grove. Peter Howard said this would not be possible as these areas were not part of the setting of the Conservation Area and do not contain any historic monument/remains or heritage assets of the built environment.

Councillor Hoyle queried the use of metric measurements and wanted imperial measures to be used instead. Peter Howard said he thought the relevant legislation had defined the lengths in metric measurements and that was why they had been used but he had no objection to the imperial equivalent being added in addition if it was thought useful.

A resident, Barry Anderson, suggested that a photograph of the footpath between School Lane and Pitcher Lane should be included, particularly one showing the high hedge made up of a *leilandii* species. He referred to the importance of this hedge in preserving the rural aspect of the footpath given the extant planning permission which had not yet been implemented for the development of 3 large dwellings on the old orchard plot at this site within the Conservation Area. He offered to provide a suitable photograph which Peter Howard said he would consider.

Councillor Dyer noted that the line of the proposed Conservation Area was slightly different for Rose Cottage, 80 Bradwell Road, Loughton – which she thought was possibly an unintended slip. The line went across the garden rather than around the property. Indeed, there does seem to be a slight difference at this point, which was not intended, and will need to be corrected in the final version.

5. Responses by paper questionnaire

13 paper questionnaires were completed – copies of these are at Appendix 4

All of the responses stated that it would be beneficial for Loughton if the new Conservation Area statement was adopted.

All of the responses were supportive of the extension of the Conservation Area as proposed. That question was not answered by Mr Bowsher on behalf of the Parks Trust – although it is not considered this is significant as the extension was not opposed by the CEO of the Parks Trust at the earlier meeting referred to above.

All of the responses were supportive of the making of an Article 4(2) direction except for David Hill (CEO of MK Council) who said he wanted more info before making a decision on that and Philip Bowsher of the Parks Trust who did not answer the question. There was therefore no opposition to the making of an Article 4(2) Direction.

The Churchwardens of All Saints Church thought there were some anomalies in the drawing up of the conservation area boundaries. They give examples that some relatively modern houses are included with the Conservation Area – e.g. those in All Saints' View, Holt Grove & Weldon Rise – whereas some older properties in Bradwell Road near the junction with Church Lane and at the end of Church Lane near its junction with Bradwell Road and are excluded – even though they define the approach to the Conservation Area from the west.

There was generally very strong support for the new statement of the Conservation Area in the paper questionnaire responses.

6. Online responses

There were 15 online responses from a total of 16 people as follows:-

1. Michael B Cashman
2. Carol Madden
3. Peter Ballantyne
4. Matthew James O'Kane
5. Christopher Bird
6. Miriam Selwyn
7. Mr David and Mrs Janice McLoughlin
8. Sarah Caulfield
9. Kevin Pope
10. Daniel Tarshish
11. Barry Anderson and Elaine Anderson
12. Mike Evans
13. Jonathan Davies
14. Conrad Lehman
15. Keith Riley

3 of these live within the Conservation Area, 11 in Loughton but outside the Conservation Area, 2 in Great Holm & 1 outside the parish.

The street addresses supplied for responders online were given as follows

25 Pitcher lane  
23 Redland Drive, Loughton, Milton Keynes MK5 8EJ  
50 Chatsworth MK89Bd  
7 Catesby Croft, Loughton, Milton Keynes, MK5 8FH  
4 Holt Grove  
OLDE BELL LANE  
13 Redland Drive Loughton Milton Keynes MK5 8EJ  
3 crane court, loughton  
7 Redland Drive  
2, Church Lane  
21 Whitworth Lane Loughton MK5 8EB  
3 All Saints View, Loughton, Milton Keynes MK5 8BB  
23 CLOVER CLOSE  
20 Leys Road

In answer to the question “Do you agree it would be beneficial for Loughton if this new Conservation Area statement replaced the existing statement adopted in 1978”, there were eleven responses as to “yes” and two “no”.

One person saying “no” commented “It would not make much difference anyway”. However their other responses to the questionnaire indicated broad agreement with the proposals – eg. They supported extending the area and making a Article 4(2) Direction. Overall, that response does not seem to be a rejection of the proposal but more a commented on whether or not it would be taken into account in making planning decisions.

The other person saying “no” is the owner of 20 Leys Road and commented as follows

“I would agree to it if the area covered by our house and adjoining land that we own were excluded. My reason for stating this is that our house is just 13 years old and therefore a modern house. I wouldn't object if the boundary came between our plots and Manor Cottage, as that, clearly, should be part of the Conservation Area. The boundary could then be continued along the back of our garden, via Loughton Brook to the bridge, and then take in the whole of the Equestrian Centre.”

This submission appears to raise a particular issue with the line of the boundary, which could be accommodated to meet the particular owners' concerns in the final version.

There were 8 people who further commented on this question, as follows:-

1. paragraphs 2.02 and 2.03 deserve special emphasis because this creates the theme for the rest of the document to support
2. The new statement is more relevant to the setting of the village today
3. Long overdue to protect & enhance the area
4. In particular, the greenbelt of the Equestrian Centre and the views from the top of Redland Drive/Ashpole Furlong over the Centre towards Loughton church spire are some of the best and worthy of preservation in Central

Milton Keynes (ditto the views from Redland Drive near Teardrop Lakes towards Leys Lane/Whitworth Lane)

5. IT IS A FANTASTIC IDEA.....VERY WELL CONCEIVED AND THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR DOING THIS. THIS IS INDEED A SPECIAL AREA AND IT IS NECESSARY TO PRESERVE IT.
6. The existing statement only begins to address the rural and village aspects of Loughton, I agree that the statement should be updated to maintain its character and protect the village from the effect of further urbanisation.
7. Protecting historical areas is important to the whole character of the New City of Milton Keynes.
8. I agree that there is a lot of pressure to develop the area. The proposed conservation area includes areas of natural beauty and heritage. The stables are a stunning example of victorian architecture, and have functioned as stables without interruption since they were built. It would be a tragedy if that were to come to an end. The fields are rare examples of ridge and furrow, of which more than 95% has disappeared from the English countryside. The views across the ridge and furrow fields to the old village of Loughton are a stunning example of English heritage and almost unparalleled anywhere in an urban setting and so accessible. To develop this would be to wipe out centuries of tradition, and significantly impoverish the community of Loughton and Milton Keynes as a whole. I therefore STRONGLY support the extension of the conservation area.

In answer to the question "Should the present conservation area be extended as described in paragraphs 1.36-1.39?" all 12 people who replied online said "yes" and none said "no". 6 responders also commented on this question as follows:-

1. However the boundary line needs to be drawn carefully for the definitive map. I believe that the existing official boundary shows clearly that both sides of Pitcher Lane(trees/hedges) are included. This is not clear in the document (either for the line showing the existing boundary or the line showing the new proposed boundary) . Milton Keynes Council may not be aware of this - tree surgery was recently undertaken without consultation on trees on the NE side. (I do not in fact disagree with the work that was done, but in future consultation should be undertaken). The red line in the document needs to delineate this more precisely in line with the existing definition.
2. The areas proposed by the extension are essential to retain the rural feel of the village, as well as to preserve some historic landscapes, such as the ridge and furrow.
3. I FULLY AGREE. I HAD NOT REALISED THAT THERE IS A MEDIEVAL FISH POND OFF LEYS... ALSO, THE EQUESTRIAN CENTRE & FIELDS KEEP THIS BEAUTIFUL PART OF MILTON KEYNES GREEN AND NOT OVER-BUILT (AS YET!!). I FEEL THAT ALL OF LOUGHTON SHOULD BE INCLUDED, AS IT IS NOW TEMPTING FOR EVERYONE TO ADD HUGE EXTENSION / BLOCKS MAKING THE SURROUNDING AREA HIDEOUS

(POTENTIALLY). I AM VERY UPSET AT THE MAY 2013 CHANGES TO PLANNING LAWS.

4. Absolutely. The Equestrian Centre forms a huge part of Loughton's green and rural landscape and therefore should be included in the new Conservation Area.
5. it is important that it is recognised there is even more pressure to build in Loughton than perhaps other areas in MK due to its location to the main train station and city centre. The extension of the conservation area will help show this is a 'no go' area for developers.
6. Absolutely yes.

In answer to the question "Are there any additional aspects of the character of the Conservation Area which should be included in the new Conservation Area statement? Please explain your reasons for suggesting these should be included", 7 responders said "No" and 5 said "yes" and the following comments were added :-

1. What about the well beside the Pitcher Lane / School Lane footpath? Overgrown at present but was usable not very long ago and could be again
2. The draft consultation document seems to have encompassed all aspects of the conservation area, which give it its unique feel.
3. THE LINEAR PARK AREA.....I FEEL THAT FIELDS AND AREAS BORDERING THE LINEAR PARK (ALONG THE BROOK, RUNNING THROUGH LOUGHTON AND THEN TOWARDS LOUGHTON LODGE) SHOULD ALSO BE PROTECTED. THE REASON IS TO KEEP THIS A VIABLE WILDLIFE CORRIDOR....AND AS GREEN AND WIDE AS POSSIBLE, AS WILDLIFE DOES REQUIRE 'WILD' SPACES (EVEN THOUGH NOT MUCH IS TOTALLY WILD HERE!).
4. Are we able to include reference to speed limits? your report mentions the narrow lanes of Loughton but these still have a 30mph speed limit. Given the nature & narrowness of a number of the road it would be good to include a change to a lower speed limit if possible
5. Ideally, it would also include ALL remaining green spaces in Loughton.
6. The illuminated road warning signs (road narrows, sharp bend etc) in School Lane and Pitcher Lane are inappropriate, unnecessary and out of keeping with the area.

In answer to the question "Should an Article 4(2) Direction under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as described in paragraphs 3.17-3.19, be made for the Conservation Area?", 11 responders said "Yes" and none said "No". Those commenting said :-

1. To protect the character of the village. However, it should not be difficult for householders to be able to submit plans for small-scale, sensitive developments and have these approved.

2. I think it is not unreasonable to introduce controls by the council to prohibit inappropriate building works that would alter and spoil the character of the area.

In answer to the question "Are there any statements in the proposed Conservation Area statement which you disagree with? If so please say what these are and give the reasons for your view", 8 responders said "No" and 3 said "yes" and the comments were as follows:-

1. 3.09 refers to Weldon Close - should be Weldon Rise. Reference to "Old School House" in 2.08 - the residents June & George Button insist that this is "the Old School".
2. paragraph 2.17 is a bit harsh in singling out the mid-20th century bungalows, which would have been built prior to the designation of the original conservation area and are the result of a natural growth of the village before the development of the new city of MK.
3. AS MENTIONED, I AM HUGELY DELIGHTED WITH THIS (OVER-DUE) DOCUMENT AND WISH IT SUCCESS IN BEING IMPLEMENTED.
4. Para 2.26 Houses in Whitworth Lane were built from late 1980s to 1995.

At page 31 of Appendix 2 is a copy of an email received from the owner of 20 Leys Road (Mr Riley). He also completed the online survey and raised the same concern about his property in his email as he had done in his online response. As stated above, his concern can be accommodated in a revised plan.

At page 32 of Appendix 2 is a copy of an email received from the local MP for the area Mr Iain Stewart MP. You will note he says he has no objection to the proposals and in particular thinks it is sensible to extend the conservations area as proposed.

## 7. Conclusions

Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council has been seeking a review of the current Conservation Area statement for several years. When it became clear that a lack of resources meant that MK Council was unable to commission the work, the Parish Council took on the challenge of commissioning the review – in cooperation and partnership with MK Council.

The Parish Council has been well served by Peter Howard who has written an excellent consultation document.

The consultation process has been thorough and wide ranging. It has included a number of different methods to engage with local people – making them aware through newsletters, the website, twitter, and through hand-delivered hard copy documents and paper questionnaires. It is contended that in all the circumstances the level of local consultation has, as demonstrated in this document, been sufficient to enable MK Council to proceed to adopt the document.

The numbers of responses were broadly in line with expectations.

Despite the proposed closing date of the consultation of end of July 2013, the time for replies was extended to enable as many responses as possible to be captured. The last online response was collected on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2013 and the last email was received dated 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013. Since then no further responses has been received.

The consultation responses have demonstrated strong support in the local community for the new Conservation Area statement and all the proposals contained in it.

The responses gained valuable comments and feedback on the consultation document which can now enable a final version to be prepared incorporating all the responses in a final document.

Peter Todd

Chair, Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013

## Appendices