



**COLSTERWORTH AND DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT  
PLAN**

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO SOUTH KESTIVEN DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**

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## **1.0 Introduction: Preparation of plan, legislative background and summary of findings**

1.1 Neighbourhood Planning was introduced in the Localism Act 2011. It allows local communities to prepare plans and allocate sites for housing and other uses in their own neighbourhood. The Plan once approved will guide future development and become part of the Development Framework for South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) and will be taken into account when considering future development proposals.

1.2 The Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) has been developed by a steering group of local residents under the guidance of Colsterworth and District Parish Council. South Kesteven District Council have assisted the process.

1.3 The Plan document is well written and clearly presented. It has a number of useful maps and features a number of photographs to illustrate key sites. It has six appendices including useful reviews of the built environment and a landscape character assessment. ***Where modifications are recommended in this document they are highlighted in bold and italics.***

1.4 There is an introduction which provides a brief background to Neighbourhood Plans and the Parish followed by sections on the national and local planning context and the Neighbourhood Plan area. An outline of the community engagement is followed by a short section on the key issues facing the area. The Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives are outlined in section six followed by sections providing details of the Policies that are proposed. The Plan includes sixteen policies. These are land use planning policies. At the end of the document a number of non-land use policies that are Parish Aspirational projects are identified. It is clear that progress towards the achievement of some of these has already been made during the Plan preparation process and others will need to be addressed through a series of

non-planning interventions and through discussions with appropriate organisations.

1.5 Having carried out the examination, for the reasons set out below **and subject to all the modifications of this examination report being accepted**, I consider that the Plan meets the basic conditions in terms of:

- having appropriate regard to national planning policy
- contributing to the achievement of sustainable development
- being in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area
- being compatible with human rights requirements
- being compatible with European Union obligations

1.6 If the Plan becomes subject of a referendum and achieves more than 50% of votes in favour, then the Plan would be “made”. The Plan would then be used to guide and determine planning decisions in Colsterworth and District Parish by South Kesteven District Council (SKDC).

## **2.0 Role of the Independent Examiner**

2.1 I was appointed by South Kesteven District Council in April 2017, with the agreement of the Colsterworth and District Parish Council to conduct this examination. The role is known as Independent Examiner.

2.2 Under the terms of the NP legislation I am required to make one of three determinations:

- The Plan should go forward to referendum because it meets all the legal requirements, “the Basic Conditions”
- The Plan as modified should proceed to Referendum
- The Plan should not proceed to Referendum because it does not meet all the legal requirements

2.3 In making my recommendation I must also determine whether the referendum should involve a wider area than the boundary of the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan boundary, whether the Plan area has been appropriately designated and whether the Plan specifies the time period to which it relates. The Plan must not include any provision that is about excluded development.

2.4 I am a Chartered Town Planner with 40 years' experience working in senior roles in Local Government, regeneration agencies and the private sector. I am independent of South Kesteven District Council and Colsterworth and District Parish Council. I am independent of residents and stakeholders in the area and have no interest in any of the land within the Neighbourhood Plan area. I am a member of the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service (NPIERS) and have carried out the independent examination of twelve Neighbourhood Plans in various parts of the country.

### **The Examination Process**

2.5 The general presumption is that most Neighbourhood Plans will be considered through written evidence. South Kesteven District Council has indicated that in their opinion no public hearing will be necessary for the Neighbourhood Plan and that the examination should consider written evidence only. An Examiner can ask for a public hearing if it is considered that certain aspects need to be more fully explored or to allow individuals to outline their case more fully. In view of the lack of residential site allocations and the relatively straight forward nature of the plan proposals and the fact that there have been few representations through the recent consultation period I have informed the Local Authority that no public hearing is required. I consider that I am able to make a recommendation based on the extensive evidence that has been provided.

### **3.0 The Neighbourhood Plan Area**

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan area consists of the whole of the Parish of Colsterworth and District which is situated 7 miles south of Grantham and 12 miles from Stamford. It is a rural Parish. The A1 and the River Witham run through the area.

3.2 Colsterworth and District Parish consists of a number of settlements with a population of 1992 according to the 2011 census. Colsterworth and nearby Woolsthorpe have a combined population of 1713 with the much smaller settlements of Gunby, Stainby, North Witham and Lobthorpe making up the rest. There are many fine buildings in the Plan area including 3 Grade 1 and over 40 Grade 2 listed buildings and a number of features of archaeological interest. Part of Woolsthorpe which includes Woolsthorpe Manor, the birthplace of Sir Isaac Newton, was designated a Conservation area in 1997. Colsterworth and Woolsthorpe are classed as a Local Service Centre by SKDC and as such have a wide range of community facilities including a school, medical practice, post office/shop village hall, places of worship, recreation grounds, and a public house. The A1 passes close to Colsterworth and there are additional restaurant and shops attached to garage forecourts there. The National Trust owned Woolsthorpe Manor also has a coffee shop. There is significant employment within the Plan area, with two industrial estates, one adjacent to the A1 and another west of Gunby.

### **4.0 Consideration of the Basic Conditions**

4.1 There are a number of basic conditions that the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan must meet in order for it to go forward to a Referendum. These are set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011).

4.2 Paragraph 8 sets out the requirements for Neighbourhood Plans to meet these **“Basic Conditions”**, before they may come into force.

Neighbourhood Plans must:

- have appropriate regard for national policies and guidance issued by the Secretary of State
- contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the local area
- be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on human rights requirements (ECHR)

I have examined the Neighbourhood Plan against all the basic conditions above. I have been assisted by a Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement, published in January 2017, that has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering group. This identifies how each of the Policies in the Plan support key principles of the NPPF and Planning Guidance and are in line with SKDC policies.

### **Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Area Designation**

4.3 On November 17, 2012 Colsterworth and District Parish Council submitted an application for the designation of Colsterworth and District Parish as a Neighbourhood Planning Area to South Kesteven District Council as the relevant Planning Authority.

4.4 The application for designation as a Neighbourhood Area was advertised in accordance with the regulations for a six-week consultation. The application was published on the Council and Parish Council website and was available at various locations throughout the Parish. A public notice was placed in the local press and local parish councils were notified. There were no responses received during the consultation.

4.5 The Council assessed that there was no overlap with any other proposed neighbourhood plan area and that the proposed boundary did not overlap with any adjoining parish or designated area.

4.6 The Council considered that the Parish Council satisfied the conditions required for a Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Forum for the purposes of Section 61G of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act and the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Area was approved on 8 February 2013.

4.7 I am satisfied that the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the basic condition of having a suitable Qualifying Body, a relevant body in accordance with section 61G of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act, the Colsterworth and District Parish Council.

#### **Basic condition: Neighbourhood Plan Area**

4.8 I am satisfied that the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic condition of having a suitable Neighbourhood Plan Area designated as outlined in Section 5 of Part 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

4.9 I am also satisfied that the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area and that there is no other Neighbourhood Development Plan in place within this neighbourhood area.

4.10 The Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan provides a clear indication of its timeframe and will cover the period 2011 – 2026. This is in line with the SKDC Adopted Core Strategy.

4.11 I am, therefore, satisfied that the Plan meets the Basic Condition relating to the specific timeframe of the Plan period.



4.12 The Basic Conditions Statement confirms that the Plan does not deal with County matters, any nationally significant infrastructure or any other matters set out in S61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

## **5.0 Regard to the National Planning Policies and Guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework**

5.1 In carrying out the examination of the Proposed Plan, and deciding whether to recommend that it should be submitted to a referendum, I am required to have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The Plan needs to meet all of them. The Neighbourhood Plan must meet the basic condition of having regard to national and local planning policies.

5.2 I, therefore, considered the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan in line with National Planning Policy and Guidance, the South Kesteven District Council Core Strategy Development Plan adopted in July 2010, the Site Allocations and Policies DPD adopted in April 2014, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2015 and various SKDC Council Strategies including the Sites and Settlements consultation July 2016.

5.3 The Basic Conditions Statement outlines the key relevant strategic policies from the Core Strategy. In the section on Policies I will outline my view on whether the Plan can demonstrate that it supports these policies and recommend modifications where necessary.

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012) and Planning Practice Guidance (2014)**

5.4 The most significant piece of guidance is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in March 2012. Paragraphs 183 -185 outline the Government's view on Neighbourhood Plans. Government consider that

neighbourhood planning gives direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need and ...neighbourhood forums can use neighbourhood planning to set planning policies through neighbourhood plans to determine decisions on planning applications.

5.5 Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood needs to be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. Provided that neighbourhood plans do not promote less development than set out in the relevant Development Plans or undermine the strategic policies, neighbourhood plans may shape and direct sustainable development in their area.

5.6 More detailed guidance and advice which expands on the general policies in the NPPF has been available since March 2014. This confirms that Neighbourhood Plans should be clear, concise, and unambiguous and supported by appropriate evidence.

5.7 I am satisfied, that the Plan has adequate regard to the policies in the NPPF and Planning Guidance. In reaching this opinion I have been assisted by the Basic Conditions Statement.

5.8 The Basic Conditions statement outlines how the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan objectives contribute positively to a number of the core planning principles that underpin the NPPF. Subject to the modifications that I recommend being accepted I consider the Plan will contribute positively to the following NPPF priorities: Building a strong, competitive economy; delivering a wide choice of homes; promoting good design; promoting healthy communities; meeting the challenges of climate change and conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

5.9 I consider that the Plan will provide a framework for future development and has evolved through extensive consultation with residents and relevant organisations and agencies.

## **6.0 Contribution to Sustainable Development**

6.1 The United Nations General assembly defined sustainable development as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Resolution 42/187).

6.2 The NPPF outlines the Government view in paragraphs 6 and 7. The purpose of the Planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three aspects of sustainability, namely economic, social and environmental.

6.3 The SKDC Core Strategy adopted a positive approach in seeking to provide a clear framework to guide sustainable growth and the management of change, thereby following the Government’s presumption in favour of sustainable development.

6.4 The Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement provides details of how the objectives and policies contained in the Colsterworth and District Plan support the principle of sustainable development. It demonstrates that the strategic objectives of the Plan cover social, economic and environmental aspects. I accept that the Plan proposals supporting appropriate commercial development will contribute to building a strong, responsive economy. I agree that the proposals to designate green spaces will have community value and contribute to building strong, vibrant and healthy communities. The Plan recognises the value of the rural nature of the area and seeks to protect it. The policies regarding views and vistas, local heritage assets and the conservation area will contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built

and historic environment. The housing policies will contribute to ensuring a sustainable future for the Plan area.

6.5 I consider, therefore, that the development that will be encouraged through the policies and proposals in the Plan should deliver sustainable development within Colsterworth and District.

## **7.0 Conformity with the Strategic Policies of the Local Area**

7.1 In carrying out the examination of the Proposed Plan, I am required to consider whether it is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area (basic condition (e)). The Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions statement confirms that the Plan has been prepared in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan. This has been confirmed by the Council. SKDC in its adopted Core Strategy has an extensive vision for the future of the District that seeks that by 2026 “South Kesteven will become a successful rural district supported by excellent social and transport infrastructure.... Rural communities will have remained viable by achieving development that supports their needs.....celebrating the districts countryside and heritage”.

7.2 The District Council vision for places like Colsterworth and District is to have diverse and thriving communities where planned and carefully managed development will have taken place to ensure that sufficient jobs and homes are provided for local people.

7.3 In section six on page 19 the Vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan are outlined. They are in line with the SKDC vision for the District.

7.4 Having reviewed the Plan I consider that the Neighbourhood Plan will contribute positively to the achievement of a number of the strategic

objectives. It should be noted that some of the objectives in the Core strategy are not relevant to the Plan area.

7.5 I am satisfied, therefore, that the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority, the adopted South Kesteven District Council Core Strategy.

## **8.0 European Union (EU) obligations, Habitat and Human Rights requirements**

8.1 A Neighbourhood Plan must be compatible with EU regulations in order to be legally compliant. There is no legal requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan to include a sustainability appraisal. However, in some limited cases where the Plan may have significant environmental effects it may require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive seeks to provide high level protection of the environment by integrating environmental considerations into the processing of plans.

8.2 It is good practice for the local authority to undertake a screening assessment to decide whether any of the proposals of the Plan are significant enough for the Plan to require a full SEA. If a screening exercise identifies significant effects an environmental report must be prepared. An initial SEA and Habitat Regulation Act screening exercise was carried out by SKDC to establish whether a full SEA was required. Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England were consulted as part of the process and all concluded that no SEA would be necessary.

8.3 The SEA and HRA screening report published on 28 July 2016 concluded that: “the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan will not have significant effects in relation to any of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of

the SEA Regulations, and therefore does not need to be subject to SEA.” The main reasons for this conclusion were that the Plan supported the implementation of policies in the adopted SKDC Core Strategy which had already been subject to SEA and assessed as having no significant environmental effects. It considered that the Plan seeks to avoid or minimise negative environmental effects through the provision of guidance on issues which should be considered when making proposals within the Plan Area. It considered that as a lower tier plan it would have limited effect on other plans or programmes and is unlikely to have environmental effects. It identified that by setting out how developers could avoid adverse environmental effects it could have an indirect positive effect. It also confirmed that there are no internationally designated wildlife sites within the Neighbourhood Area. There are three within 20km of it but the Plan will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the internationally designated sites either on its own or in combination with other plans and did not need to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

8.4 I agree with the conclusions that were reached.

8.5 None of those who submitted written representations have drawn attention to any other relevant EU obligation that I should take into account in my examination of the Proposed Plan. Taking all of the above into account I am satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act 1998 and there is no substantive evidence to the contrary.

## **9.0 Background documents and Information considered**

9.1 In order to examine and reach conclusions on the Neighbourhood Plan Proposals I have considered the following documents:

- South Kesteven District Council Core Strategy to 2026 (adopted 2010)
- Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document April 2014
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2015
- Landscape Character Assessment
- Sites and Settlements Consultation July 2016
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2011)
- The Localism Act (2012)
- The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012)
- Planning Practice Guidance
- The detailed consultation responses to the consultation

9.2 The Local Authority and six other organisations made representations during the final formal Regulation 16 consultation period, all of which I have considered. The comments were minor in nature. There were no representations by residents or local landowners at this stage.

9.3 In addition, I visited the area unaccompanied for one day in April 2017 and explored the various sites and locations referred to in the Plan.

## **10.0 Evidence Base and Consultation**

10.1 One of the most important principles in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 is that local communities must be given ample opportunity to help to shape the future of their area. Successful consultation will ensure that the views and priorities of the community are reflected in the Plan and the likelihood of a successful referendum vote increased. Section 15 (1) (b) of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 requires a Consultation Statement to be produced and submitted with the Neighbourhood Plan.

10.2 Section 15 (2) specifies that this must contain: details of the persons or bodies that were consulted about the proposed Neighbourhood Plan. It must explain how they were consulted and summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted. Furthermore, it must describe how these issues have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan. I am satisfied that the Consultation Statement, published in January 2017, that was provided to the District Council meets the requirements of the regulations.

10.3 A Steering Group of residents was established in October 2013. This led the consultation process over a two-year period under the guidance of the Parish Council. Detailed information regarding the public consultation that took place in preparation of the Plan in the Neighbourhood Plan has been provided in the Consultation Statement. The report provides a timeline of the consultation process. It shows that initial consultation and evidence gathering took place in early 2014. In September 2014, a questionnaire was delivered to over 900 households with 250 forms completed, an impressive 28% response rate. Further extensive consultation took place with residents, community groups, schools, businesses and stakeholders at the key stages of Plan development in a variety of forms and locations. It is clear that events were well publicised and many people took the opportunity to participate.

10.4 A Draft Plan was prepared and subject to formal Regulation 14 public consultation between June 1 and July 22, 2016. It was widely publicised with a leaflet to each household, posters and public notices, a copy on the Parish Council web site, and letters sent to statutory bodies, local organisations and land owners. There were 35 responses which were broadly favourable. There is an audit trail showing how the Plan was changed to incorporate the suggestions. This included the deletion of two potential Local Green Space designations. I do not consider that any significant issues raised were not addressed.



10.5 The final version of the Plan was subject to Regulation 16 consultation which took place between November 25, 2016 and January 13, 2017. There were seven responses, all of which I have considered.

10.6 I am satisfied that considerable consultation has taken place throughout the various phases of the Plan development and that the Plan has received the overwhelming support from respondents. Where concerns have been raised it is clear that in most cases steps have been taken to respond positively to the comments.

10.7 I am satisfied, therefore, that the Neighbourhood Plan Consultation statement, meets the basic condition regarding consultation and complies with Section 15 (2) of part 5 of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

## **11.0 The Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives**

11.1 The Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan has a clear vision for the future of the area. The vision is: “A flourishing, diverse community in an economically sustainable rural environment, that conserves its natural and historic heritage and quality of life”.

11.2 The Plan outlines how the vision will be realised through seven objectives that have been derived through the consultation process and an overarching objective of “contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.” The seven objectives relate to meeting the housing needs of the community; conserving and enhancing the natural environment; conserving heritage assets; respecting the built environment, retaining and improving local services and community facilities; supporting the growth and diversification of the rural area and promoting safe and suitable access through good traffic management.

The objectives are clearly written and aspirational. The Policies that follow flow from these objectives. Each Policy includes a statement which provides the local context, an indication of what the Policy is intended to achieve and how it conforms to the SKDC Core Strategy.

## **12.0 Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan Policies**

12.1 The Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan Policies begin in Section seven on page 20. There is a long section providing details of the local Planning context. It highlights the issue of sustainability and Colsterworth and Woolsthorpe by Colsterworth's designation as a "Local Service Centre". The SKDC Core Strategy seeks to support development that maintains and enhances the role of the more sustainable rural communities identified as Local Service Centres and restricts development in the "Smaller Villages." The Council will seek to encourage all settlements and their Local Communities to consider the positive benefits that growth and development can bring to their local area. The Policy approach of the Neighbourhood Plan is in line with NPPF and the emerging SKDC Policy.

12.2 In their response during the Regulation 16 consultation SKDC has indicated that following the Settlement Hierarchy Review Local Service Centres will be called "Larger Villages" and previously paired villages may be separated. This may have an impact during the Plan period with Woolsthorpe by Colsterworth being classified as a smaller village in the Local Plan. This information does not have an immediate impact on the current consideration of the Neighbourhood Plan.

12.3 The introductory section notes that SKDC had 5.8 years of identifiable and deliverable land in its 2015 Annual report. It recognises, however, that the emerging Local Plan will need to make sufficient allocations to meet the needs it has identified for the period up to 2036, which is an additional ten

years to the life of this Plan. Several sites in the Plan area will be subject to sustainability appraisals during 2017/2018.

#### 12.4 **Policy 1: Residential Development**

12.5 The Plan does not make any specific new site allocations for residential development. This is because the current housing requirement has been met through the considerable number of new homes approved since 2011. This includes approval in 2015 for 48 homes in Bridge End Road with 16 of these being affordable homes. Policy 1 confirms that residential development will be supported subject to the size of scheme being up to 10 dwellings in Colsterworth and Woolsthorpe and up to three dwellings in the smaller settlements of North Witham, Stainby and Gunby. Development will need to be appropriate to its surroundings using the Built Environment review document as a guide. This is a positive land use policy. This is in line with one of the core principles of the NPPF, namely delivery of a wide choice of high quality homes. The Policy proposes that the impact of new development on the existing environment should be considered. The NPPF outlines that Plans should always seek to secure “high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings”. The NPPF also states that Plans should take account of “the different roles and character of different areas ... recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving communities within it”. The Policy is also in line with the SKDC Core Strategy. ***In paragraph 7.17 delete the fourth bullet point. There is no evidence provided in the text to support this statement.***

12.6 Recommendation: The Policy provides a clear context for future development. I do not recommend any further changes to this Policy.

### **13.0 Policy 2 Affordable Housing on Rural Exception sites**

13.1 This Policy supports the development of small scale development outside the existing settlements in the Plan area to meet local need and prioritised for those with a local connection. It is in line with the SKDC Core strategy. Such development could help the sustainability of the Plan area.

13.2 Recommendation: The Policy provides a clear context for future development. I do not recommend any changes to this Policy.

### **14.0 Policy 3 Preserving the separation between Colsterworth and Woolsthorpe**

14.1 The two settlements are viewed as “paired” villages in the Core Strategy. The approved development for 48 homes east of Bridge End, once completed, will extend Colsterworth north. Without a positive policy commitment, it would be easy for the two settlements to merge through further incremental development. The purpose of Policy 3 is to ensure that an area of separation is maintained to protect the distinctive nature of both Colsterworth and Woolsthorpe. The area that has been identified and shown on Proposal Map 1 which includes Woolsthorpe Manor is appropriate for this purpose.

14.2 Recommendation: I do not recommend any changes to this Policy.

### **15.0 Policy 4 Open Countryside**

15.1 The Plan area is predominantly rural and agricultural in nature typified by minor hedge lined roads. Policy 4 is a positive land use policy that seeks to protect the rural nature of the area. It is in line with the SKDC Core strategy which is quoted in paragraph 7.30. It also reflects the views of the community expressed during the consultation. The Policy outlines that development will be generally restricted. However, it outlines a number of exceptions to this. The Policy supports development where it can be shown to preserve and enhance the landscape character or sites of ecological,

archaeological or historic value. The Policy needs to be seen in the context of Policy 5 which identifies important views that need to be retained.

15.2 Recommendation: I do not recommend any changes to this Policy.

#### **16.0 Policy 5 Important views and Vistas**

16.1 This Policy seeks to protect ten important views within the Plan area. The Plan document provides a description of each site accompanied by high quality maps and excellent photographs. These views were highly regarded by the community during the consultation stages. Some of these views are unlikely to be vulnerable to development since they are in isolated locations. However, having visited each of these sites I can understand the community wish to protect the attractive rural setting of the Plan area. I agree with the statement in 7.39 that this Policy demonstrates the added value that Neighbourhood Plans can bring through encapsulating community aspirations in a way that is difficult for a Local plan covering a much wider area.

16.2 Recommendation: I do not recommend any changes to this Policy.

#### **17.0 Policy 6 Trees and Hedgerows**

17.1 This is a positive Policy in line with the NPPF seeking to protect trees and hedgerows wherever possible. They help to define the character of the area.

17.2 Recommendation: I do not recommend any further changes to this Policy.

#### **18.0 Policy 7 Heritage Assets**

18.1 The Plan area contains a significant amount of buildings and features of historic interest, with three Grade 1 and over 40 Grade 11 listed buildings, along with other features of historic interest. This is a positive land use policy that seeks to preserve and enhance the heritage assets. It is in line with the

Core Strategy and NPPF. ***In Policy 7 b) delete the words “on significance” which are unclear and do not add anything to the description.***

18.2 Recommendation: Subject to the above I do not recommend any further changes to this Policy.

#### 19.0 **Policy 8 Conservation Area**

19.1 A Conservation Area was designated in Woolsthorpe in September 1997 which includes Woolsthorpe Manor, the home of Sir Isaac Newton. ***In 7.47 there is a web link regarding the Conservation Area Policy 7. This is unobtainable. I recommend that a map showing the Conservation Area is included in the Plan documentation.*** Policy 8 is a positive Policy that seeks to support development within the conservation area subject to conditions relating to scale, design and materials used. It seeks to ensure that future development will not adversely affect the Conservation area. This is a positive land use Policy.

19.2 Recommendation: Subject to the above I do not recommend any further changes to this Policy.

#### 20.0 **Policy 9 Environmental Quality**

20.1 This is a positive land use policy welcomed by Natural England and line with the NPPF and the SKDC Core Strategy. The Plan area is rural in nature but the major north/south A1 road runs through the area and is close to Colsterworth. Traffic numbers have increased and this policy seeks to ensure that any new development should include design features that minimise emissions, noise, light pollution, flood risk and waste. ***The reference to increased traffic in paragraph 7.51 should be changed from 3.13 to 3.34.***

20.2 Recommendation: I do not recommend any further changes to this Policy.

## **21.0 Policy 10 Local Services and Community Facilities**

21.1 The Plan recognises the importance of retaining, protecting, and where possible, enhancing the existing range of community facilities and services. Policies 10 and 11 relate to this. Policy 10 is a positive land use policy that is in line with the NPPF, the SKDC Core strategy and the Site Allocations DPD. It recognises that in some cases services or facilities may become unviable but seeks assessments to have been made before decisions are taken.

21.2 Recommendation: I do not recommend any changes to this Policy

## **22.0 Policy 11 Colsterworth Village Hub**

22.1 The Plan recognises that Colsterworth has developed in a way that means that it does not have a traditional centre, with facilities being located in different parts of the village. Policy 11 is a positive land use policy that seeks to encourage development that will help the creation of a small-scale hub of community and local services that will enable greater social interaction. Such development could increase opportunities for social interaction.

22.2 Recommendation: I do not recommend any changes to this Policy

## **23.0 Policy 12 Local Green Spaces**

23.1 The NPPF enables local communities to identify green areas of local significance for special protection. Paragraph 76 states that by designating areas as Local Green Space “local communities will be able to rule out development other than in very special circumstances”. The Framework indicates that Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. It is essential, therefore, that it meets the key justification criteria of being not extensive tracts of land, being of local significance and in reasonable proximity to the community it serves.

23.2 The Plan Policy considers that there are five well used green spaces within the area that are highly valued and provide significant community benefit. These include play parks, a sports field and the nature trail, all of

which are small in scale. I recognise that two further potential sites were withdrawn following objections during the consultation process. Having visited the site I consider that all the sites are located close to the communities that they serve and are well used. SKDC have made no objection to any of these being designated Local Green Spaces and the National Trust have particularly welcomed the fact that this policy will make a positive contribution to the setting of Woolsthorpe Manor. This policy has also been welcomed by Natural England.

23.3 Recommendation: I do not recommend any changes to this Policy

#### 24.0 **Policy 13 The Rural Economy and Tourism**

24.1 The SKDC Core strategy seeks to broaden and diversify the employment bases within the District. Although most development opportunities and sites for specific employment sectors will be located in the larger centres such as Grantham and Stamford, appropriate employment, tourist related opportunities and appropriate diversification schemes will be supported in the rural areas of the District. There is already a specific allocation for 10 hectares at the Colsterworth junction of the A1 and Policy 13 supports further development on the A1 junction providing sufficient landscaping and light, noise and air pollution impacts are minimised. It seeks also to further encourage appropriate employment and development within and adjoining the Local Service Centre. Outside this area, the Policy further supports employment proposals that meet the Core Strategy Policy E1 criteria and the Landscape Character Assessment. The Plan recognises that more sites may be needed and will be allocated in the emerging Local Plan, currently in draft form. Policy 13 is, therefore, a positive land use policy that will contribute to future sustainability

24.2 Recommendation: I do not recommend any changes to this Policy



## 25.0 **Policy 14 Communications Infrastructure**

25.1 Policy 14 is a positive policy that supports improved electronic communications. It is in line with the NPPF.

25.2 Recommendation: I do not recommend any changes to this Policy

## 26.0 **Policy 15 Traffic Management**

26.1 Policies 15 and 16 seek to promote safe and suitable access within the Plan area. Policy 15 provides background support from the NPPF and the Core Strategy and the issue of traffic management was highlighted during the community consultation process. Policy 15 is a positive land use policy that supports proposals for development where they incorporate a series of positive traffic management measures.

26.2 Recommendation: I do not recommend any changes to this Policy

## 27.0 **Policy 16 Public Rights of Way and Village walkways**

27.1 Policy 16 is a positive land use planning policy that supports proposals for new development that protect and enhance the existing network of public rights of way and village walkways. ***These are not shown in any of the documentation I recommend that the Rights of Way are shown on a map.***

27.2 Recommendation: I do not recommend any further changes to this Policy

## 28.0 **Monitoring and Review and Community Aspirations**

28.1 Sections 8 and 9 consider how the Plan will be delivered and monitored. It also includes a series of Community Aspirations. These are not land use proposals and do not form part of the Plan. They do, however, provide a clear indication of the priorities of the Parish and provide a clear indication of the steps that have already been taken to progress some of the priorities that were identified through the consultation process. The Parish

Council recognises that it will need to use its best endeavours to persuade a number of key organisations, in particular SKDC, to prioritise their programmes in order to achieve their implementation.

## **29.0 Summary and Recommendation**

29.1 I am satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and would like to congratulate the Colsterworth and District Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Planning Steering group for the considerable amount of work that they have undertaken to produce the Plan. The Plan has been excellently produced and presented. It positively promotes development while seeking to protect the Plan area from inappropriate development. It demonstrates the clear vision and aspiration of the community to maintain and improve the local environment while seeking to promote developments that will contribute to increasing the sustainability of the settlements.

29.2 It is evident that the District Council have supported the process.

29.3 In accordance with Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, outlined below is a summary of my findings.

I am satisfied that Colsterworth and District Parish Council is an appropriate Qualifying Body and is therefore able to produce and submit a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish of Colsterworth and District. I am satisfied that the area included in the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan is appropriate and was designated accordingly by South Kesteven District Council. I am also satisfied that the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area and that there is no other Neighbourhood Development Plan in place within this neighbourhood area.

29.4 The Plan covers an appropriate period, namely from 2011 to 2026.

29.5 I am satisfied that the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan takes sufficient regard to National Planning Policies and guidance and that the Plan does not make any provision for any excluded development.

29.6 I consider that the Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan policies, subject to minor modifications, will make a positive contribution to sustainable development. The policies could promote economic growth and serve to maintain and enhance the physical appearance of the area and well-being of the community. The production of the Plan should provide confidence to the community.

29.7 I understand that South Kesteven District Council undertook an SEA and Habitat Regulation Act screening exercise to establish whether a full SEA was required and concluded that there were no policies included in the Neighbourhood Plan that meant an SEA was required. I consider therefore that the legal requirements of the EU's SEA Directive have been met. The Neighbourhood Plan proposals will have no significant effects on the environment or any European sites.

29.8 I consider that the Plan complies with the rights outlined in the Human Rights Act.

29.9 I consider that extensive public consultation has taken place, led by the Neighbourhood Plan steering group. I am satisfied that the public consultation meets the requirements of Section 15 (2) of Part 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

29.10 I conclude that the Plan meets the Basic Conditions as defined in the Localism Act 2011, Schedule 10 and Schedule 4B, 8 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

29.11 In accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Schedule 10 (2) (b) I recommend the modifications specified in this report are made and that the draft Neighbourhood Plan for Colsterworth and District is submitted for a Referendum.

Dr Angus Kennedy OBE  
Community Regeneration Partnership  
May 2017