

East Hagbourne Parish Council

Mrs Allison Leigh
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To:
Mr Sam Townley,
Neighbourhood Planning Enquiries Officer
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils
135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Oxfordshire OX14 4SB

East Hagbourne Neighbourhood Plan Examiner's Clarification Note

Dear Sam,

Thank you very much for providing an opportunity for East Hagbourne to respond to Mr Ashcroft's clarification notes.

The response of the Parish Council is shown in the Attachment. The letter from Mr Ashcroft is reproduced, with East Hagbourne Parish Council's response to each section following in [blue](#) text.

Yours sincerely,

Allison Leigh,
Clerk to the Council

Sent by email
cc by email to
Ricardo Rios, Cheryl Soppet, SODC
Jane Murphy, Pat Dawe, SODC Councillors
D Rickeard, C Topping, EHNP Steering Group
Iain Duff, EHPC Chairman

ATTACHMENT

East Hagbourne Neighbourhood Development Plan

Independent Examiner's Clarification Note and East Hagbourne response

Context

This Note sets out my initial comments on the submitted Plan. It also sets out areas where it would be helpful to have some further clarification. For the avoidance of any doubt matters of clarification are entirely normal at this early stage of the examination process.

Initial Comments

The Plan is very well-presented. The distinction between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. The Plan provides a distinctive vision for the neighbourhood plan area in a challenging context in terms of the relationship between existing planning policy and the emerging Local Plan. The focus on its separation from Didcot and the designation of local green spaces is both appropriate and distinctive to the neighbourhood area. Policy H3 is well-constructed.

East Hagbourne Response

The Parish Council welcomes these comments.

Points for Clarification

I have read the submitted Plan and its associated documents. I have also visited the neighbourhood area. I am now in a position to raise some initial issues for clarification. They are designed for the Parish Council. The comments that are made on these points will be used to assist in the preparation of my report. They will also inform any modifications that may be necessary to the Plan to ensure that it meets the basic conditions.

Policy VC1a

The proposed Local Green Gap at Lower End Field as shown on Figure 5 does not appear to relate to features on the ground. This contrasts with the other three proposed Local Green Gaps.

I acknowledge that the neighbourhood area forms its eastern boundary. However please can the Parish Council explain its decision to identify the geographic extent of this Green Gap?

Could the concept practically be administered by the District Council through the development management process if its boundaries are not clear?

East Hagbourne Response

The Green Gap at Lower End Field came under intense scrutiny during the planning application of 2015, subsequently refused at appeal in 2017, and referred to on page 27 of the NP report. That planning application related to the part of the Green Gap adjacent to New Road and extending some 400m to the east. The planning and appeal process confirmed that the area did constitute a gap and that it was "valued landscape".

In drafting the NP we were guided both by the discussions in the planning appeal and by our two landscape studies, the East Hagbourne Village Landscape & Character Assessment 2018 update (Appendix 2) and the East Hagbourne Green Buffer Assessment (Appendix 10). These studies identified the special features of the area as the open and tranquil rural landscape, giving a 'sense of place', the wide views to the Chilterns AONB to the east and the Downs to the south, and the gap in residential properties on the east side of New Road providing the gap between town and village. The studies also identified that the northern part of Lower End Field lies on a low ridge. This, together with the belt of trees along the northern edge of the Gap, means that the houses to the north, lying on lower land, are partially obscured when seen from the south. Development on this ridge would be particularly prominent as well as diminishing the gap between East Hagbourne and Didcot.

The Green Buffer Assessment, in addition to informing our NP, provides recommendations to define the Green Buffer Zones included in the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan, adopted by SODC in October 2017. These recommendations (Appendix 10, Figure 04) are based on landscape considerations and cover extensive areas, extending beyond our own parish boundary.

In defining the area to have the additional protection of a Local Green Gap, we considered the minimum area needed to protect the gap and the special landscape features outlined above. The northern boundary is defined by the straight line of Footpath 197/24, extrapolated eastwards to the East Hagbourne Parish boundary with South Moreton Parish where the boundary executes a 90° turn to the east. Because we considered only those parts of the Green Buffer located within the NP Area, the eastern boundary follows the parish boundary south to where it crosses Bridleway 197/17. From there, the southern boundary returns in a direct line to the corner of the last house plot on New Road. This southern boundary was chosen because it broadly follows the line of the low ridge mentioned above and protects the most important sightlines.

We acknowledge that the boundaries of the Local Green Gap are not, in this instance, defined by hedges or other visible features. We believe, however, that the proposed area is based on boundaries that can be clearly identified from mapping and so should be able to be managed practically. Although a larger area could have been identified as 'open and tranquil rural landscape', we consider that the area proposed is proportionate for the special protection of a Local Green Gap.

Policy VC1c

Does the 'long distance views' element of this policy overlap with Policy VC2 and Figure 6?

East Hagbourne Response

Policy VC1c refers to the Coscote Fields Local Green Gap. Our landscape studies, identified as special features the open and tranquil character of the area and the wide views, so for that reason, both aspects were specified in the policy.

With respect to views, we considered that we should be specific and so referred to protecting the "identified" long distance views. By this we mean those identified in Figure 6 (although we did not explain this very clearly). We would therefore consider Policy VC2 and Figure 6 to be complementary to Policy VC1c.

Policy VC6

Do the two parts of the policy largely say the same thing?

Is this policy intended to apply principally to the new housing allocation (Policy H1)?

East Hagbourne Response

The first part of Policy VC6 on Lighting specifically refers to new housing development and is intended to provide guidance for any new development that might impact on street lighting. Although the housing allocation in Policy H1 is the most immediate application, the policy is intended also to guide any additional proposals that might arise now or in the future.

The second part of the policy seeks to provide more general guidance that lighting should be appropriate to the village environment. Such lighting impacts might result from decisions of the Local Highways Authority to require higher lighting standards in existing residential streets or might accompany a new mini-roundabout or pedestrian crossing. The key factors are outlined in the supporting text, including the loss of dark skies and glare from domestic and commercial lighting alluded to in NPPF Para 125.

Policy H2

Does the second part of the policy require a developer to comply with each of the three types of housing (where appropriate)?

East Hagbourne Response

Yes, the intention is that (where appropriate) all three requirements should be considered.

Policy H3

This policy is particularly well-constructed.

East Hagbourne Response

Thank you.

Policy CF2

Should I conclude that the 'key East Hagbourne community facilities' are those listed on pages 48 and 49?

If so, should they be listed in the policy for clarity?

East Hagbourne Response

The text on pages 48-49 covers those facilities of greatest importance to the community. We would support the addition of a list, but to allow future flexibility would not wish that list to preclude consideration of other facilities not listed. Suitable wording would be "The community facilities include".

The facilities mentioned in pages 48-49 are:

The Village Car Park

The Fleur-de-Lys
Hagbourne Village Hall
East Hagbourne Pavilion and Recreation Ground
East Hagbourne Community Shop and Post Office
The Allotments at Butts Piece
Hagbourne Church of England Primary School
St Andrew's Church

Policy E1

The Plan's assessment of Local Green Spaces (LGSs) is very comprehensive. It helpfully includes the sizes of the Spaces concerned.

However, I will be recommending that two of the proposed LGSs (Lawson's Orchard and Tudor House allotments) are shown on maps which would better identify the areas concerned.

The Policies Map (Figure 3) properly shows the overlap between the Green Corridor and the three proposed LGSs within its boundary. However, has the Parish Council considered any potential conflict that would exist between the different policy approaches (VC1d and E1) that would apply within the three proposed LGSs concerned?

East Hagbourne Response

We agree that more detailed maps would be appropriate for the two Local Green Spaces (LGSs) mentioned and plan to source 1:2500 scale maps as used for planning applications.

We believe the provisions of Policies VC1d and E1 are complementary. VC1d, the Green corridor Local Green Gap, relates to the setting of the village and the soft transition to the town to the north, so any planning proposal within the Local Green Gap (LGG) would be assessed for its impact on the setting of the village.

The designation of an LGS sets a higher requirement in that development on that site would be permitted only in very special circumstances. We set out in the LGS assessments the specific reasons why Butts Piece/The Millennium Wood and the Bakers Lane paddocks deserve a level of protection over and above that afforded by a LGG. Should a proposal to develop on an LGS nevertheless come forward, we believe it is appropriate that it should be assessed both for its "very special circumstances" with respect to E1 and for its wider impact on the Local Green Gap under VC1d.

Representations made to the Plan

I will contact the Parish Council again once the Regulation 16 consultation period has concluded. That communication will ask if Parish Council wishes to make observations on any representations that have been received by the District Council.

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for comments by Friday 7 December 2018. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It reflects the factual basis of the questions raised.

In the event that certain responses are available before others I am happy to receive the information on a piecemeal basis. Irrespective of how the information is assembled please can all responses be sent to me by the District Council and make direct reference to the policy/issue concerned.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

East Hagbourne Neighbourhood Development Plan

23 November 2018