

Wallingford Neighbourhood Development Plan

Examiner's Clarification Note

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 provides a distinctive vision for the neighbourhood area.

The presentation of the Plan is very good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. The Plan makes good use of photographs and maps. It includes a comprehensive range of policies which are logically grouped into chapters. It is an excellent example of a community-generated neighbourhood plan

A key feature of the Plan is its extensive evidence base and the way in which the relevant information feeds into the various policies.

Points for Clarification

I have read the submitted documents and the representations made to the Plan. I have also visited the neighbourhood area. I am now in a position to raise issues for clarification with the Town Council. There are also specific questions for the District Council.

The comments made on the points in this Note will be used to assist in the preparation of my report and in recommending any modifications that may be necessary to the Plan to ensure that it meets the basic conditions.

I set out specific policy clarification points below in the order in which they appear in the submitted Plan.

Questions for the Town Council

Policy WS1

This policy reads more as a strategic statement or vision rather than a policy.

Please can the Town Council explain its purpose and the way in which it is intended to provide the clarity required by the NPPF?

Policy WS4

The policy criteria have a negative tone. I am minded to recommend modifications to the criteria so that they are positively-worded. The overall effect of the policy would, however, remain unchanged.

Does the Town Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy HA1

Is HA1 2(c) a land use policy?

Policy HA3

Has the Town Council undertaken an assessment of the continued importance of the views and vistas in the Conservation Area Appraisal?

The current policy requires the reader to access a separate document. Should the identified views be identified on a map within the neighbourhood plan?

Policy HA4

Does the policy have regard to the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations?

In particular would there be any direct and functional relationship between the development of Site E /Site B/other sites of 10 or more houses and the restoration of buildings at risk elsewhere in the town?

Policy EE2

The policy is affected by the September 2020 changes to the Use Classes Order. I am minded to recommend modifications to the policy to ensure that it has regard to national policy.

Does the Town Council have any observations on this proposition? In particular does it have any comments on the way in which the new Order impacts on the purpose of the policy?

Does the Town Council have any detailed comments on the District Council's updates on this issue as discussed at the recent Local Plan hearings?

Policy EE3

Does the Town Council have any detailed comments on the District Council's updates on this issue as discussed at the recent Local Plan hearings?

Policy TC1

The policy is affected by the September 2020 changes to the Use Classes Order.

I am minded to recommend modifications to the policy to ensure that it has regard to national policy.

Does the Town Council have any observations on this proposition? In particular does it have any comments on the way in which the new Order impacts on the purpose of the policy?

Policy TC5

Does the Town Council have any information on the occupancy rates of the existing off-street public car parks?

Policy MC2

Does part 4 of the policy have regard to the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations?

In particular would there be any direct and functional relationship between new development and bus transport infrastructure in the town centre?

Should the policy take account of the scale and nature of the development proposed and its location?

Policy CF3

Has any work been undertaken to assess the various proposed local green spaces (LGSs) against the contents of paragraphs 99 and 100 of the NPPF?

If not, please could this task be undertaken.

To what extent did the Town Council engage with landowners of the proposed LGSs as part of the Plan preparation process?

Policy CF6

Does the first element of the policy have regard to the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations?

In particular would there be any direct and functional relationship between new housing development and the provision of health and social facilities in the town?

Could the second part of the policy be simplified so that it was more general in effect (to support the provision of new facilities) without losing its intended purpose? What is the purpose of the relationship with the District Council's Infrastructure Delivery Schedule in this part of the policy?

Policy CF7

Does this policy add any distinctive value to the existing local arrangements (involving the District Council and the County Council) for securing developer contributions towards education provision?

Question for the District Council

I can see that the Main Modifications for the emerging Local Plan have now been published. Please can the District Council advise on the timetable for the eventual adoption of the Local Plan.

What is the planned trajectory for the delivery of new homes in the neighbourhood area within the neighbourhood plan and local plan periods?

In particular are there component trajectory figures for both Site B and Site E?

Representations

Does the Town Council wish to comment on any of the representations made to the Plan?

In particular, in addition to those representations already referenced in the policy-based questions, does the Town Council wish to comment on the representations made by:

- South Oxfordshire District Council (6)
- Croudace Homes (8)
- L&Q Estates (9)
- Chilterns Conservation Board
- David Wilson Homes (12)
- St Edwards Homes Limited (17)?

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 23 October 2020. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It is intended to maintain the momentum of the examination.

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 could it come to me directly from the District Council.

In addition, please can all responses make direct reference to the policy or the matter concerned.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

Wallingford Neighbourhood Development Plan

2 October 2020