

Long Wittenham Parish Council response to Examiner's Clarification Note (March 2022)

Prepared by Andrea Pellegram MRTPI

Introduction

In the note, the Examiner sought further clarification on the Plan. The Parish Council's responses are set out below.

Policy LW1

The Examiner's comments are:

The revisions which have been made to Sections B and C are both helpful and detailed.

The approach taken in Section D of the policy is entirely appropriate. However, the matter would traditionally appear in a Section 106 agreement at the planning application stage. Does the Parish Council consider the matter to be a land use issue or is it a contractual matter best addressed in the supporting text?

Plainly the development of the community hub site has now been refined following the identification of the Scheduled Monument. Does the Parish Council have any up-to-date information on the extent to which the development of the community hub site is viable? Similarly, does developer interest still exist in its eventual development to the specification now included in Policy LW1?

Response:

The matters in LW1D are necessary and should be delivered in planning decisions. It is for this reason that they are included in the policy rather than the text. By including the wording within the policy, there is greater certainty that these matters will be included in any relevant planning decision letter and conditions. The Parish Council would prefer that this clause is retained in the policy.

The developer is aware of how Policy LW1 has evolved and is currently drawing up revised plans to submit to the planning authority in accordance with Policy LW1.

These facts are confirmed in the letter from the developer as well as confirming the viability of the development and their ongoing commitment to it. This is copied in Appendix 1.

Policy LW5

The Examiner's comments are:

The approach taken on protected views is very comprehensive. The revised supporting text is particularly helpful.

Nevertheless, did the Parish Council consider including the reverse of the approach in the policy which would ensure that development proposals which did not accord with the policy (and the supporting text) would not be supported?

Response:

The policy wording was meant to be "positive" but the Parish Council would welcome strengthened wording to "not support" development proposals that did not accord with the policy.

Implementation and monitoring

The Examiner's comments are:

The Plan properly addresses these important matters to good effect.

I am minded to recommend a reference to the possibility that changes to national planning policy may occur within the lifetime of any 'made' Plan and that the Parish Council may need to assess the importance of any such changes.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Response:

The Parish Council would agree to this modification.

Representations

The Examiner's comments are:

Does the Parish Council wish to comment on any of the representations made to the revisions to the Plan in the recently-concluded consultation period?

In particular, does it wish to comment on the representations made by:

- Lagan Homes;
- The University of Reading; and
- Oxfordshire County Council.

Response:

The Parish Councils responses are set out in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1: Letter from developer



Arlington House, Curridge, Thatcham, Berkshire RG18 9AB
Tel: 01635 247950 Fax: 01635 247955
www.thomashomes.co.uk

Peter Rose
Long Wittenham Parish Council
Long Wittenham
Oxfordshire

16th March 2022

Dear Peter
LONG WITTENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

You have asked me to clarify a number of points raised by the examiner.

Firstly, in respect of our legal agreement with the landowner. Our original option expired and we have drawn up a new agreement on identical terms. The paperwork is approved between the solicitors and we anticipate exchange of contracts within the next 1-2 weeks?

Secondly, The Diocese and Oxfordshire County Council have expressed their continuing support for the project. They are very encouraged with plans for the new school. We have a meeting arranged on 28th March with both parties, to discuss the next stages of the development.

Finally, we are satisfied with the wording of Policy LW1. The scheme as it stands is viable and we have a revolving credit facility in place with HSBC to deliver the project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C.A.S. Brotherton".

C.A.S. Brotherton
Director

Appendix 2: Long Wittenham Parish Council response to further consultation ending 8 March 2022

Prepared by Andrea Pellegram MRTPI, 14 March 2021

1	Individual – support noted
2	Individual – support noted
3	Individual – support noted
4	Individual – support noted
5	Individual – support noted
6	Individual – support noted
7	Individual – support noted
8	Individual – support noted
9	Individual – support noted
10	Individual – support noted
11	Individual – support noted
12	Organisation (Anglican Church) – support noted
13	Individual – support noted
14	Individual – support noted
15	Organisation (Wittenham Against Overdevelopment) – support noted
16	Individual – support noted
17	No comment
18	Individual – support noted
19	Individual – support noted
20	Individual – support noted
21	Individual – support noted
22	Individual – support noted
23	No comment
24	Organisation (Coal Authority) – no comment
25	Organisation (Sport England) – no specific comment
26	Organisation (Natural England) – no specific comment

27	Organisation (Historic England) – No objections. Comment was made on The Site Allocations Evidence paper paragraph 96 wording. The Parish Council would agree to any changed wording that the Examiner may wish to suggest.
28	Agent (Avison Young on behalf of National Grid) – no specific comments
29	<p>Organisation (Armstrong Planning on behalf of Lagan Homes) – the representation objects on the basis that the “final decision made within the plan had been entirely pre-ordained to the prejudice of any other interested promoter”.</p> <p>The summarised concerns are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The pre-ordained nature of the site assessment process is prejudicial to interests of other landowners. The letter states: <p><i>Our client would have been entirely happy to discuss ways in which their land could contribute towards the community achieving its wider objectives, either through the physical delivery of infrastructure or through associated financial contributions. They were never afforded the opportunity.</i></p> <p>Comment: A robust process has objectively assessed all sites put forward in a fair and transparent manner. The process also includes an SEA which brought in environmental considerations.</p> 2. The plan suffers from a fundamental lack of consideration of the viability of the hub proposals. <p>Comment: Viability is confirmed by the Developer in App 1 above.</p>

30	<p>Agent (Barton Willmore responding on behalf of University of Reading) – the representation seeks revised wording in some of the NDP policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed notional green gap is not supported by the NPPF • The policy LW4 is not supported by the NPPF, • The policy LW8, key view from Sire’s Hills should be deleted <p>Comment: The notional green gap policy in LW4 is a refinement of the Local Plan’s countryside policies ENV1. The wording has been agreed with the planning authority and is in conformity with policies in the Development plan. The Parish Council has no other comments to offer on the first and second objections. What LW4 adds to policy ENV1 is a local definition of how that policy should be applied and therefore should be retained.</p> <p>The Examiner’s attention is drawn to the Didcot Garden Town strategy (https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/10/Delivery-Plan-Chapter-8-10th-October-2017-web-q-1.pdf) which identified key views to Wittenham Clumps (figure 8.11) and green buffers across University of Reading land (figure 8.12).</p> <p>For the same reasons, the wording of LW8 (sic – this should read LW5) should be retained because it provides local specificity. However, the Parish Council would not object to a provision for all development over a certain scale to be required to produce an LVIA within these view corridors.</p> <p>On a final note, University of Reading seeks inclusion of wording that would allow for alternatives to come forward with the NDP should the scheme in LW1 fail to be delivered. This suggestion is not tenable – if a new site were required for whatever reason, the Parish Council would be required to renegotiate all aspects of the land allocation (s) and this would require a full review of the NDP.</p>
31	<p>Organisation (Oxfordshire County Council) –</p> <p>The changes to the 2021 draft NDP have been noted and most objections withdrawn.</p> <p>Specific changes proposed are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LW1Bb – new text agreed by Parish Council • Para. 46 (page 16) – suggest replaced wording “The now adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 policy TRANS3: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Transport Schemes, safeguards land including for the widening of the A4130 at Didcot, Clifton Hampden Bypass, Didcot Science Bridge and Culham River Crossing.” • LW1Ca,b- delete a and b • Para. 53 – delete sentence agreed by the Parish Council • Para. 81 – The agreement has expired since the NDP was revised. A new agreement has been drawn up with exactly the same terms as the original. The parties have agreed the terms and the agreement should be signed within 1-2 weeks. This is confirmed in the letter from the developer see App 1.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Para. 82 – The situation is unchanged and OCC and the diocese are still committed to the project. There are ongoing talks to refine the plan as confirmed in the letter from the developer. See App 1. |
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