

Woodcote Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

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 clear and concise vision for the neighbourhood area. In general terms it is an excellent example of a neighbourhood plan review. In particular, it clearly identifies both the retained and the new policies. The new policies are usefully weaved into the policy coding format of the 'made' Plan.

The package of supporting documents is very comprehensive. In combination, the Assessments on Housing Needs, Local Green Spaces, Landscape and Visual Impact and Protected Views underpin the relevant policies in the Plan.

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 various high-quality maps and photographs.

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 both with the Parish Council and with the District Council.

The comments made on the points in this Note will be used to assist in the preparation of the examination 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 Parish Council

Policy EV1

As I read this policy it is more of a process matter than a policy.

Please could the Parish Council explain the basis on which it crafted the policy?

Might it be better used as supporting text for the housing sites identified in Section 12 of the Plan?

Policy E5/E6

The Plan addresses these matters in a comprehensive way.

Appendix E helpfully shows photographs of the proposed Protected Views

Appendix F helpfully shows photographs on the proposed Local Green Spaces

Policy H1

It is appropriate that the Parish Council has properly considered the landscape implications of additional development in the neighbourhood area to meet the local requirements as now captured in the Local Plan. In addition, the Plan takes proper account of the importance of the surrounding AONB.

Nevertheless, was this important matter not already discussed at the Local Plan examination and where the Planning Inspector and the District Council came to a different view about the capacity of Woodcote to accommodate additional growth?

Has the Parish Council undertaken a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the type which takes account of the supporting at paragraph 4.28 of the adopted Local Plan?

Policy H4

As I read the policy it is a process rather than a policy matter and could be seen as supporting text for Policy H3.

On what basis did the Parish Council consider that it was important to include the policy in the Plan?

In any event is it a land-use policy?

Policy H7

I see the justification for the policy.

However, on what basis did the Parish Council select the nine homes threshold?

Policy H8

I understand the approach taken by the Parish Council towards the size of housing sites.

However, on what basis did it select 30 homes as the maximum size?

Section 12

Within the broader context of my question in relation to Policy H1 above, this part of the Plan is well-written.

Policies HS1-5 and HS6-9 respectively sets out a very robust approach towards the standards expected for the development of the sites already allocated in the 'made' Plan and those being proposed in the review of the Plan. This approach will do much to achieve both sustainable development and high-quality development of the various sites.

Questions for the District Council

To what extent did the District Council and the Planning Inspector grapple with the specific issues associated with of the delivery of a 15% increase in the number of dwellings in Woodcote as part of the preparation of the Local Plan 2035?

To what extent do the provisions of paragraph 4.28 of the Local Plan apply specifically to the neighbourhood area?

What is the current housing land supply in South Oxfordshire?

Does the District Council have a more up to date version of Table 4f in the Local Plan?

Representations

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

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

- Chilterns Conservation Board;
- Lone Star Land;
- Oxfordshire County Council;
- Woodcote Properties;
- TA Fisher; and
- South Oxfordshire District Council

The District Council proposes a series of revisions to certain policies in the Plan. Does the Parish Council have any comments on the suggested revisions?

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 4 April 2022. 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 would be 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

Woodcote Neighbourhood Development Plan.

2 March 2022