

Culham 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 clear and concise vision for the neighbourhood area. The relationship between the vision and objectives of the Plan and its policies is very clear. It is underpinned by the excellent Design Code.

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 maps which are produced to a high quality.

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:

Policy CUL2

I looked carefully at the site during my recent visit. I can see that the policy is attempting to grapple with the tensions of enabling the reopening of a drinking establishment on the site on the one hand and green belt policy on the other hand

However, is the final paragraph of the policy necessary given it largely restates national policy and the matter is already addressed in the third criterion? As an alternative could it be weaved into the opening element of the policy?

Does the commentary in paragraph 5.13 inform the third criterion of the policy?

Policy CUL3

I am minded to recommend the deletion of Part B of the policy. As submitted it is anticipating a scenario which may not arise. Should it do so, it could then be addressed in any review of a made Plan.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policies CUL4 and 5

These are excellent policies which are underpinned by the first-class Design Code.

They provide a very positive local response to Section 12 of the NPPF.

Policy CUL7

This is another good policy.

As I read its contents the first sentence of Part C should sit at the end of Part B.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy CUL9

The approach taken on this matter is both comprehensive and ambitious. As the Plan acknowledges the policy context for encouraging higher energy efficiency standards at a local plan or neighbourhood plan scale is complex.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on the District Council's representation on this matter? In addition to what extent has the Parish Council assessed this policy against the Written Ministerial Statement of March 2015?

In any event, Parts C, D and E of the policy read as supporting text (to Parts A and B) rather than as policies in their own right. Please could the Parish Council explain the basis on which it crafted these parts of policy?

Is the policy intended to apply to the development of the strategic site (land adjacent to the Culham Science Centre) in the adopted Local Plan (Policy STRAT9)? If so, has the impact of the proposed neighbourhood plan policy on the viability of that site been tested?

Policy CUL10

The District Council makes specific suggestions to make this policy more effective in the operation of the development management system

Does the Parish Council have any comments on those suggestions?

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:

- Mr Simonson and Mrs Simonson (Representations 1 and 2);
- South Oxfordshire District Council; and
- Morrells Farming Limited?

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 7 November 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

Culham Neighbourhood Development Plan.

17 October 2022