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Clerk to the Council: Michelle Legg

Mr Ashcroft
c/o SODC

Dear Mr Ashcroft,

Re: Comments on the Opinion submitted to the Examiner regarding the Review of the Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan

WPC respectfully address the Conclusions listed on page 15 of the Opinion as follows:

1. In carrying out the Regulation 14 consultations for the Wheatley Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) in 2019 and the WNPR in June 2022 the WPC published similar details for both consultations in line with the relevant regulations. Information was published on the WPC website, the local Newsletter and various notice boards around Wheatley and Holton. As far as the WPC is aware there were no objections to the consultation procedure.
2. In accordance with the provisions of section 12 of the NPPF the WPC commissioned a DGC by a professional consulting firm (AECOM) who were briefed on the local situation with respect to LP2035 and the WNP. AECOM were aware that the DGC would be incorporated into the forthcoming WNPR. AECOM were invited to respond to the comments in the Opinion and their response is shown in a letter to the Vice Chairman of the WNP Committee in the Appendix over. Especially significant is the comment that the DGC *"has not been explicitly drafted with the site in mind does not mean that many of the codes are not relevant for it"*.
3. Policy H1, the DGC and policy SPOBU were not drafted with the intent to create a conflict with the 2020 Permission or to the Allocation.
4. WPC does indeed accept that modifications may be required in the WNPR. This is to be expected following any Examination. If there are conflicts between the WNPR and the proposals for development of STRAT14 then resolution of these conflicts hopefully can be achieved based on the findings of the current Examination.

Many thanks for your assistance and if there are any further queries, please do get in contact.

Alison Sercombe,
Chairman of Wheatley Parish Council

Appendix

Comments on the Opinion submitted to Wheatley Parish Council by AECOM

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for the conversation this afternoon. I would make the following points:

- Reflecting where the site and the steering group were at the time, the technical support was awarded on the basis of helping to ensure that any future infill and small-scale development is in keeping with the character of Wheatley.
- As such, the DGC report was drafted to be applied to growth in and around the village, but not explicitly the OBU scheme. The note is largely correct in that respect.
- That said, the report does include the site as a character area and included in the Settlement Edge area type, and specifies which codes apply to this area type.
- That the report has not been explicitly drafted with the site in mind does not mean that many of the codes are not relevant for it. They are.
- But if a design guide or code were prepared to be applied to a site of 500 homes, it would normally include more content on strategic layout, movement, street design, block types and other things.
- We would understand if the Examiner chose to remove the strategic site from policy H1, but don't think it is necessary that he does. However, he may suggest that we put the site into its own area type (so not Settlement Edge) and specify which codes are particularly relevant to it.

On some of the broader points made:

- To me, everything in policy SPOBU – WHE25 looks to be very reasonable. I understand the questioning of the Green Belt point, however, given the de-designation.
- I am not well appraised enough to comment on the process points.
- The code or guide discussion in para 27 and then from 68-78 is of no real consequence. It is well established that neighbourhood planning groups can establish design guides and codes, and often do.

Happy to discuss further.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

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