

Hartley Wintney Neighbourhood Development Plan

Independent Examiner's Clarification Note

Context

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 is very well-presented. The quality of the photographs and maps is first-class. It results in a very readable and interesting document. The Plan provides a clear and distinctive vision for the neighbourhood area.

The Plan includes several objectives and policies which address the future need for housing development in the neighbourhood area. This part of the Plan is the principal focus of the examination.

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 some initial issues for clarification. They are designed for the Parish Council. The comments that are made on these points will be used to assist in the preparation of my report. They will also inform any modifications that may be necessary to the Plan to ensure that it meets the basic conditions.

Section 5.2

On what basis has the Parish Council reached its conclusion in paragraph 5.2.11? How does the conclusion relate to the suggested relationship of the neighbourhood plan to the emerging Local Plan in paragraph 5.2.8?

Policy HWS1

I note the information in paragraph 5.4.7. However, has any equivalent and specific information been received from the Environment Agency in respect of the Nero Brewery site on flood risk issues? As included in the submitted Plan paragraph 5.4.5 there does not appear to be any definitive information on this matter.

For the Parish Council's information I have prepared a separate note for the Environment Agency on both Policy HWS1 and HWS3.

Policy HWS2

I can see the approach taken in paragraphs 5.5.6/5.5.7/5.5.8.

To what extent does the Parish Council consider this site to represent sustainable development?

Policy HWS3

I understand the approach in the first bullet point. However, given the location of the site within the village is it necessary? In any event might it have the potential to frustrate innovative design solutions?

Policy HW4

This policy is well-considered. However, would the first bullet point be better placed as the third bullet point given that good design is the ultimate outcome (and which is captured in the Design Guide)?

Policy HW5 – first bullet point

I have read the supporting text. However, is there any specific evidence to the effect that developments need to be size-restricted and that the 50 dwellings identified is the appropriate number?

Policy HW6

The policy and Table 3 are well-considered. I can see that the second bullet point of the policy reflects paragraphs 76 and 78 of the NPPF (2012).

The third bullet point then seeks to identify special circumstances in which development would be supported. This runs contrary to the matter-of-fact approach in the NPPF. I am proposing to recommend that the third bullet point becomes supporting text.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy HW7

I looked at the various views. I can appreciate why they were selected.

However as submitted the policy does not define 'harm' and/or the extent of any impact which may be acceptable. I am minded to recommend a modification that would provide some clarity for the District Council in its decision-making process.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy HW8

As submitted this policy largely repeats national policy. Given the importance of this matter to the neighbourhood area I am proposing to recommend a modification along the lines suggested by the District Council.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

In addition is the policy intended to apply to all the conservation areas as shown in figure 24?

Policy HW10

Having visited the neighbourhood area, I can see the need for a policy of this type

Policy HW12

Similar comments to HW10.

The fourth bullet point of the policy reads in a rather vague way. Plainly planning applications would not be needed simply to retain existing residential accommodation on upper floors.

Is the policy offering support to wider development proposals which would retain existing residential accommodation and/or provide access to create new residential accommodation on upper floors where it does not currently exist?

Policy Numbering

Different policies have differing formats. The initial section uses HWS (1-3), the middle section uses HW (4-5) and the final section uses just numbers (6-13).

Does the Parish Council have a preference for consistency purposes?

For clarity in the development management process and given the number of active neighbourhood plans in the District I would suggest that either the HWS or the HW prefix should be used.

Representations made to the Plan

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

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for comments by 12 April 2019. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It reflects the factual basis of the questions raised.

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 can all responses be sent to me by the District Council and make direct reference to the policy/issue concerned.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

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28 March 2019