

Stapleford and Great Shelford 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. It is underpinned by a series of background documents which directly inform some of the policies. This is best practice. The Design Guidance and Codes is a very impressive document.

The presentation of the Plan is good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. In addition, the Plan makes good use of various high-quality maps and photographs. The theme-based objectives helpfully provide a structure for the Plan and its policies.

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 able to raise issues for clarification with the parish councils.

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 S&GS1

I note the details in the supporting text. Given that the Plan does not allocate sites for housing development, should I assume that the policy applies only to infill/windfall sites?

Policy S&GS2

As with Policy 1, I note the approach taken. However, is the ambition of the policy a process issue rather than a land use matter?

Policy S&GS4

Is there any need for the word 'only' in the policy given the range of criteria in the policy?

Do the parish councils anticipate that development proposals should meet all the criteria?

Policy S&GS5

In general terms, this is a good policy and will support the development of homes which are suitable for multi-generational living

Could the need for any such developments to be located within the development framework (currently in criterion g) be incorporated within the opening element of the policy?

I am minded to recommend that parts 2-4 of the policy are relocated into the supporting text. Do the parish councils have any comments on this proposition?

Policy S&GS6

The policy addresses design in a very positive way. In addition, the approach taken is underpinned by the excellent Design Guidance and Codes.

Given that the Plan does not allocate sites for housing development should I assume that the policy applies only to infill/windfall sites?

I am minded to recommend that the third part of the policy is relocated into the supporting text. Do the parish councils have any comments on this proposition?

Policy S&GS7

In general, the policy takes a positive approach towards mitigating and adapting to climate change through building design.

However, is the approach taken in the second and third parts of the policy either reasonable or appropriate?

Policy S&GS8

In general, the policy takes a positive approach towards renewable energy schemes.

However, does the policy bring any parish-level value beyond that which exists in relevant national and local planning policies?

Policy S&GS12

I looked carefully at the landscape character of the neighbourhood areas, and the relationship between the various settlement (and between those settlements and Cambridge) during the visit.

Do parts 1b and 2 of the policy address strategic matters rather than parish-based issues?

Policy S&GS13

It would be helpful if the parish councils expanded on the way in which it assessed the identified views beyond the information set out on paragraph 8.17 of the Plan.

Several representation comments about the general nature of the views identified. Again, it would be helpful if the parish councils expanded on the way in which they selected the views

There is an opportunity later in this Note to comment on individual representations.

Policy S&GS14

The District Council does not consider that any of the three proposed Important Countryside Frontages meet the criteria for designation and should be deleted from the Plan. It would be helpful if the parish councils comment about the way in which they consider that the proposed Frontages meet the criteria set out in the adopted Local Plan.

Policy S&GS15

The policy on local green spaces (LGSs) takes the matter-of-fact approach in the NPPF and is underpinned by the details in the supporting text and in the LGS Assessment.

There is an opportunity later in this Note to comment on representations which relate to specific proposed LGSs.

Should the second part of the policy (on a Protected Village Amenity Area) be a separate policy rather than a sub-component of a local green spaces policy?

Policy S&GS17

In general, the policy takes a positive approach towards delivering community infrastructure priorities alongside new development.

However, does the policy bring any parish-level value beyond that which exists in relevant national and local planning policies?

Policy S&GS21

How have the parish councils considered the overlap between the submitted policy and Policy CSF/5 of the adopted Cambridge Southern Fringe AAP (which designates land for a countryside enhancement strategy).

Does the first part of the policy require that developers proactively look to take opportunities to implement the countryside enhancement measures described in the supporting text of the policy?

If so, how would the District Council determine the extent to which those opportunities had been pursued? Should the policy acknowledge that a developer will usually be able to secure countryside enhancement measures only within the application site?

Representations

Do the parish councils wish to comment on any of the representations made to the Plan?

I would find it helpful if the parish councils commented on the representations received from:

- Cambridgeshire Constabulary;
- Cambridge Past, Present and Future;
- Great Shelford (Ten Acres) Limited;
- St John's College Cambridge;
- Swifts Local Network;
- NHS Property Services;
- Tim Zoll (Property Link Consultants);
- Axis Land Partnerships;
- Cambridgeshire County Council (Assets Team);
- Ely Diocesan Board of Finance;
- East West Rail Company; and
- Nightingale Land.

The District Council make a series of comments both on the policies and other general matters. It would also be helpful if the parish councils responded to this representation.

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 28 March 2025. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It is intended to maintain the momentum of the examination.

If 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.

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Independent Examiner

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5 March 2025