

Mepal 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 Objectives and the policies are helpfully described in the table in paragraph 15.3.

The presentation of the Plan is very good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. The Plan makes excellent 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 able to raise issues for clarification with the Parish 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 1

This policy provides a broad spatial strategy for the parish and a context for other policies in the Plan.

Policies 2 and 3

These policies will do much to safeguard community facilities in the parish. They acknowledge that the viability of community facilities may alter during the Plan period.

Policy 4

The potential effectiveness of the first part of the policy (on EV charging) has now been overtaken by Part S of the Building Regulations. As such I am minded to recommend its deletion and replacement with an appropriate explanation in the supporting text.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy 6

Is the intention of the policy to identify non-designated heritage assets to which paragraph 209 of the NPPF will apply?

Policy 8

As the Parish Council will have noticed, this policy has generated significant commentary from affected landowners. Please can it explain in further detail its approach towards Important Verdant Open Areas and Areas Sensitive to Change and Intensification.

It would also be helpful if the Parish Council expanded on its commentary in the Basic Conditions Statement about the extent to which its approach to these designations is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan.

Policy 9

I am minded to reverse the order of the sentences in the policy to ensure that it has a positive approach. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy 10

This policy has been well-developed and is helpfully underpinned by the Local Green Spaces Evidence Document

Representations

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

It would be helpful if it commented on the representations received from:

- the Havebury Housing Partnership;
- the Church Commissioners for England; and
- Cheffins (on behalf of three parishioners).

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

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses to the questions raised by 16 February 2024. 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.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

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23 January 2024