

## **Ropley 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 distinctive vision for the neighbourhood area. In particular it addresses a series of key issues in a positive fashion.

The layout and presentation of the Plan is good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. The maps are generally effective. The use of colour and photographs is very helpful.

#### ***Points for Clarification***

I have read the submitted documents and the representations made to the Plan and have visited the neighbourhood area. I am now in a position to raise issues for clarification with both the Parish Council and the District Council.

The comments made on the points in this Note will be used to assist in the preparation of my 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.

#### ***Questions for the Parish Council***

##### ***Policy RNP1***

I can see how paragraph 7.008 draws a distinction between the settlement gaps and the coalescence gaps. Nevertheless, is there a specific reason why proposed development in the different types of gaps are intended to be assessed against the same policy?

Do either or both of the gaps have the same purpose as the identified Gaps in the Joint Core Strategy 2014 (Local Plan Part 1- Policy CP23 and paragraph 7.29)?

To what extent does the volume of planning applications (and their decisions) in the proposed gap areas justify the need for their application of a specific policy approach in the Plan?

Could the purpose of the policy be achieved by the application of general countryside policies in the Local Plan?

Alternatively, could the purpose of the policy be achieved by the application of a general coalescence policy that set out to retain the separation/distinctiveness of the settlements/groups of houses without defining specific gap areas?

##### ***Policy RNP2***

I saw the recent development of Cotebrook Fields of Bighton Hill. In this context on what basis has the property to the immediate north-east been excluded from the proposed settlement boundary for Ropley Dean?

What is the purpose of the final paragraph of the policy? It appears to conflict with the first sentence of paragraph 7.015. In some of the proposed settlement boundaries it might have the effect of preventing any development from taking place.

*Policy RNP3*

How were the Key Vistas and Areas of Significant Visual Prominence defined?

There are policy overlaps between Policies RNP1 and RNP3. How would these overlaps be applied through the development management process?

*Policy RNP4*

I agree with the intended approach set out in the second part of the policy. However how would it apply in association with permitted development rights?

*Policy RNP7*

As submitted, this reads more as a process requirement than a policy. Could it be incorporated within the text of Policy RNP5?

*Policy RNP8*

Is there any further evidence on how the proposed sites meet the criteria in paragraph 77 of the NPPF in general terms, and on the 'demonstrably special' matter in particular?

What are the respective sizes of LGS1/2/3/5?

To what extent were the owners of the various proposed LGSs notified about the Plan's intentions during the plan-making process in accordance with national policy (PPG 37-019-20140306)?

The final parts of the policy offer considerably more scope for future development on the proposed LGSs than that envisaged in paragraph 78 of the NPPF (2012). Subject to the responses to the three points above I am proposing to recommend that the flexibility envisaged by the policy (for community and amenity works) is better represented in the supporting text. The policy element would then be the matter of fact approach in the NPPF. Do you have any comments on this proposition?

*Policy RNP14*

The third paragraph of the policy addresses both listed buildings and conservation areas. As submitted, it suggests that all buildings within conservation areas are listed. I am proposing to separate the two issues by way of a recommended modification. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

*Policy RNP15*

As RNP4 above.

Is this policy intended only to apply to driveways and parking areas associated with new dwellings (and where appropriate controls could be applied)?

*Policy RNP17*

Given the evidence about the neighbourhood area I can fully understand the purpose of the policy. However, I am minded to recommend a modification to the first part of the policy to reflect permitted development rights enjoyed by home owners. Does the Parish Council have any observations on this proposition?

*Policy RNP19*

On what basis is the site referred to as a rural exception site when it is directly allocated in the Plan?

What is meant by 'avoids any harm' to the Church Street conservation area and its setting? To what extent has this matter already been considered by the Parish Council in promoting the site for development?

*Policy RNP20*

In the second bullet point I understand how a resulting scheme should respect the characteristics of the adjacent properties. However in what way is it anticipated that any scheme should reflect the characteristics of the village as a whole? In addition to which 'village' does the policy refer?

Given the Planning Inspector's comment on the earlier proposal for the redevelopment of the site should the 'pattern of development' be explicitly referenced within the generality of the 'characteristics' of the area?

*Policy RNP21*

On what basis is the site referred to as a rural exception site when it is directly allocated in the Plan?

*Policy RNP22*

Could this policy sensibly be incorporated into Policy RNP21?

In doing so are the definitions in the second part of the policy (on page 69) supporting text rather than policy?

*Question for the District Council**Policy RNP20*

Is there any timescale for the determination of the current planning application for residential development on this site (30024/11)?

**Representations**

Does the Parish Council have any comments on the following representations made to the Plan?

- Dean Farm Partnership
- T. Hough
- Simon Hombersley
- East Hampshire District Council (Policies 1/13)
- Mike Gillott
- Historic England
- James Bevan/Pegasus
- Mr and Mrs Wood

- Hornbeam Homes

Does the Parish Council have comments on any of the other representations made to the Plan?

***Protocol for responses***

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 4 March 2019. 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 am happy to receive the information on a piecemeal basis. Irrespective of how the information is assembled please could it all 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

Ropley Neighbourhood Development Plan.

18 February 2019