

Hodsock and Langold 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.

The presentation of the Plan is very good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is clear.

Sections 2-7 provide a very helpful backcloth to the parish and the preparation of the Plan. Figure 6 usefully connects the policies with the objectives of the Plan.

The other submission documents are concise and proportionate to the matters included in the Plan itself.

The various submission and evidence-based documents are comprehensive and well-considered. In particular the Langold Design Codes work is very impressive.

Points for Clarification

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

Given the current circumstances faced by the country I have not yet visited the neighbourhood area. I will make a decision in due course with the District and the Parish Council on the need or otherwise for a visit to the neighbourhood area before I finalise my report.

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.

Policy 1

The third and fourth components of the policy helpfully identify the need for the Plan to be monitored and reviewed. However as included in the policy it does not take on a policy format.

I am minded to recommend a modification so that the third and fourth components are repositioned into Section 19 (Implementation and Monitoring)

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy 2

The first part of the policy is also a statement rather than a policy. Is the Parish Council's intention to have a policy which would support infill development where it met the identified criteria (a-g)?

Policy 3

This is an excellent and well-designed policy

Policy 4

The first part of the policy comments about 'encouraging' certain types of proposals. In policy terminology 'encouraging' has little if any effect.

I am minded to recommend a modification so that the use of encouraging is replaced by 'should provide where practicable and viable'

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy 5

This is an interesting and distinctive policy.

In the first part developers are asked to consider four criteria

I am minded to recommend a modification so that 'consider' is replaced by 'take into account'

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Does the second part of the policy address footpath connections between the Park and the surrounding urban areas?

Policy 6

Para 14.4 comments that specific assessments have been made for each proposed Local Green Space.

For my clarity is that work shown in Appendix 2 of the Plan?

Policy 7

I understand the principles behind the policy

In relation to third part of the policy to what extent would the approach differ from the application of general countryside policies elsewhere in the neighbourhood area?

To what extent has the Parish Council sought to use natural or man-made features to define the boundaries of the proposed Green Gaps?

Policy 9

This policy reads well in general terms

However, on what basis did the Parish Council decide to use the 0.5 hectares figure in the second criterion?

Would the criterion be more flexible to business needs and yet still address environmental issues if it took a more general format and commented about a size appropriate to the part of the neighbourhood area in which it was proposed to be located?

Policy 10

In the first part of the policy is the list of activities intended to be an exclusive list?

If not, could the list of specific uses be relocated into the supporting text?

Policy 11

This is a good policy.

Am I correct in assuming that it is intended to be applied to the heritage assets identified in the relevant figures and Appendix 2?

Representations

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

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 6 May 2020. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It is intended to maintain the momentum of the examination. The timescale is longer than might otherwise be the case. It takes account of the current situation with Covid:19.

For clarity there is no need for the Parish Council to meet physically to discuss and agree its response. I recommend those who have been involved in the preparation of the Plan consider this Note electronically.

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 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

Hodsock and Langold Neighbourhood Development Plan.

3 April 2020