

# **Hodsock and Langold Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 - 2037**

**A report to Bassetlaw Council on the Hodsock and  
Langold Neighbourhood Development Plan**

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## **Executive Summary**

- 1 I was appointed by Bassetlaw Council in January 2020 to carry out the independent examination of the Hodsock and Langold Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2 The examination was undertaken by way of written representations. I visited the neighbourhood plan area on 29 May 2020.
- 3 The Plan includes a variety of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. There is a very clear focus on designating local green spaces, identifying Green Gaps and safeguarding its distinctive character.
- 4 The Plan has been underpinned by community support and engagement. It is clear that all sections of the community have been engaged in its preparation.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report I have concluded that the Hodsock and Langold Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.
- 6 I recommend that the referendum should be held within the neighbourhood area.

**Andrew Ashcroft**  
**Independent Examiner**  
**22 June 2020**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Hodsock and Langold Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2037 (the Plan).
- 1.2 The Plan has been submitted to Bassetlaw District Council (BDC) by Hodsock and Langold Parish Council in its capacity as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They aim to allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012, 2018 and 2019. The NPPF continues to be the principal element of national planning policy.
- 1.4 The role of an independent examiner is clearly defined in the legislation. I have been appointed to examine whether or not the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions and Convention Rights and other statutory requirements. It is not within my remit to examine or to propose an alternative plan, or a potentially more sustainable plan except where this arises as a result of my recommended modifications to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions and the other relevant requirements.
- 1.5 A neighbourhood plan can be narrow or broad in scope. Any plan can include whatever range of policies it sees as appropriate to its designated neighbourhood area. The submitted Plan has been designed to be distinctive in general terms, and to be complementary to the development plan in particular. It seeks to provide a context in which the neighbourhood area can maintain its distinctiveness and identity. It proposes a range of policies which include the identification of Green Gaps and the designation of a series of local green spaces.
- 1.6 Within the context set out above this report assesses whether the Plan is legally compliant and meets the basic conditions that apply to neighbourhood plans. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends changes to its policies and supporting text.
- 1.7 This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome the Plan would then be used to determine planning applications within the neighbourhood area and will sit as part of the wider development plan.

## **2 The Role of the Independent Examiner**

- 2.1 The examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted neighbourhood plan meets the relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 2.2 I was appointed by BDC, with the consent of the Parish Council, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of both the BDC and the Parish Council. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.
- 2.3 I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I am a Director of Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited. In previous roles, I have over 35 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level. I am a chartered town planner and have significant experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations and health checks. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral System.

### *Examination Outcomes*

- 2.4 In my role as the independent examiner of the Plan I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the examination:
- (a) that the Plan is submitted to a referendum; or
  - (b) that the Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
  - (c) that the Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 2.5 The outcome of the examination is set out in Section 8 of this report.

### *Other examination matters*

- 2.6 In examining the Plan I am required to check whether:
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area; and
  - the Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one neighbourhood area); and
  - the Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.
- 2.7 Having addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.6 of this report I am satisfied that all of the points have been met.

### 3 Procedural Matters

3.1 In undertaking this examination I have considered the following documents:

- the submission Plan.
- the Character Assessment
- the Basic Conditions Statement.
- the Consultation Statement.
- the Langold Design Code.
- the representations made to the Plan.
- the Parish Council's responses to my Clarification Note.
- the analysis of the proposed Local Green Spaces.
- the adopted Bassetlaw Core Strategy 2011.
- the emerging Bassetlaw Local Plan 2020-2037.
- the Bassetlaw Green Gap Study (2019).
- the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019).
- Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014 and subsequent updates).
- relevant Ministerial Statements.

3.2 I visited the neighbourhood area on 29 May 2020. The timing of this visit reflected Covid:19 travel restrictions that were in place during the examination process and was agreed with both BDC and the Parish Council. I looked at its overall character and appearance and at those areas affected by policies in the Plan in particular. My visit is covered in more detail in paragraphs 5.9 to 5.16 of this report.

3.3 It is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations made to the submitted plan, I concluded that the Plan could be examined by way of written representations.

## 4 Consultation

### *Consultation Process*

- 4.1 Policies in made neighbourhood plans become the basis for local planning and development control decisions. As such the regulations require neighbourhood plans to be supported and underpinned by public consultation.
- 4.2 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 the Parish Council has prepared a Consultation Statement. This Statement is proportionate to the Plan area and its policies.
- 4.3 The Statement records the various activities that were held to engage the local community and the feedback from each event. It also provides specific details on the consultation processes that took place on the pre-submission version of the Plan (July to August 2019).
- 4.4 The Statement sets out details of the comprehensive range of consultation events that were carried out in relation to the various stages of the Plan. They include the organisation of, or attendance at, the following events:
- the Christmas Fair (November 2017);
  - the public meeting (January 2018);
  - the Music Festival (July 2018);
  - the consultation on proposed housing sites and the Design Code (November 2018); and
  - the Music Festival (August 2019).
- 4.5 The details in the Statement set out the nature of the community questionnaire and other consultation exercises and the responses received. They demonstrate the way in which those responsible for the preparation of the Plan sought to address the expectations of the wider community. A significant part the Statement sets out how the submitted Plan took account of consultation feedback at the pre-submission phase. It does so in a proportionate and effective way. The analysis in Table 2 helps to describe how the Plan has progressed to its submission stage.
- 4.6 Consultation on the submitted plan was undertaken by BDC. It ended on 2 March 2020. This exercise generated representations from the following persons and organisations:
- Bassetlaw District Council
  - Highways England
  - Natural England
  - Nottinghamshire County Council
  - Severn Trent Water
- 4.7 I have taken account of all the representations in preparing this report.

- 4.8 Where it is appropriate to do so I refer to specific representations on a policy-by-policy basis.

## 5 The Neighbourhood Area and the Development Plan Context

### *The Neighbourhood Area*

- 5.1 The neighbourhood area is the parish of Hodsock and Langold. It is located approximately 6 kms to the north of Worksop. Its population in 2011 was 2474 persons living in 1034 households. It was designated as a neighbourhood area on 18 December 2015.
- 5.2 The village of Langold is the largest settlement in the neighbourhood area. It has an attractive planned layout based around the A60 Doncaster Road. Langold was built between 1923 and 1927 to provide housing for the miners of Firbeck Colliery. The former colliery was located to the immediate south of the village. It has a good mix of houses and retail and commercial properties based in the neighbourhood centre on the main road. It enjoys a range of community services including the attractive Langold Country Park.
- 5.3 The remainder of the neighbourhood area consists of attractive countryside. It extends to the A1 in its south-eastern corner. Hodsock Priory dominates the central part of the neighbourhood area. It is now a wedding venue.

### *Development Plan Context*

- 5.4 The development plan covering the neighbourhood plan area is the Bassetlaw District Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2010 - 2028 ('the Core Strategy'). The Core Strategy sets out a vision, objectives, a spatial strategy and overarching planning policies that guide new development in the Plan period.
- 5.5 Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy provides a focus for new development based around the existing principal settlements in the District. Langold is identified as a Local Service Centre where there will be regeneration opportunities together with the services, facilities and development opportunities available to support moderate levels of growth.
- 5.6 Policy CS5 sets out specific development opportunities and requirements for Langold (and its immediate neighbour Carlton-in-Lindrick). In summary these include:
- a priority for the redevelopment of brownfield sites;
  - delivering improvements to the mix and tenure of housing;
  - delivering improvements to the amount of employment space;
  - contributing to the enhancement of Langold Park;
  - contributing towards the delivery of affordable housing;
  - supporting the ongoing viability of local Centres; and
  - supporting the redevelopment of the former Firbeck colliery and other brownfield sites for residential development.



- 5.7 The submitted Plan has been prepared within its wider adopted development plan context. In doing so it has relied on up-to-date information and research that has underpinned existing planning policy documents in the District. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter. It is clear that the submitted Plan seeks to add value to the Core Strategy and to give a local dimension to the delivery of its policies. This is captured in the Basic Conditions Statement.
- 5.8 The District Council has embarked on the preparation of a new Local Plan. Once adopted it will replace the Core Strategy. The Local Development Scheme indicates that the Local Plan will be submitted for examination at the end of 2020. On this basis it is not at a sufficiently-advanced stage to play any significant role in the examination of the submitted neighbourhood plan. I have however given appropriate weight to the emerging policy on Green Gaps insofar as it directly impacts on the submitted neighbourhood plan.

*Visit to the neighbourhood area*

- 5.9 I visited the neighbourhood area on 29 May 2020. It was bathed in late Spring sunshine. I approached from Oldcotes to the north. This helped me to understand the neighbourhood area in its wider landscape context. It also highlighted its proximity to the main road network.
- 5.10 I parked in Chestnut Road in Langold. Given the compact nature of the neighbourhood area I was able to undertake the majority of the visit by foot. I looked initially at the proposed Green Gaps to the north of the village. I saw the way in which the proposed gaps were distinct in their scale, form and character. I walked up to the B6463 so that I could see the western gap from the north.
- 5.11 I then retraced my steps to the northern end of the village. I walked along Harrison Drive and saw the BDC industrial units, the football pitch and the allotments. In doing so I saw the relationship between the village and the planning permission for housing development to the north of the football ground.
- 5.12 I then walked to the village centre to look at the retail facilities along Doncaster Road. I saw their vibrancy and the orderly queues outside both the chemist and the bakers. This part of the visit helped me to understand Policy 8 more fully. I also looked at the attractive and informative Firbeck Main colliery gardens off Doncaster Road.
- 5.13 I then walked into the Country Park via Church Road. I saw that it was being well-used by local residents and children during the half term holidays. I retraced my steps along Church Road and then continued along Doncaster Road to the other entrance to the Country Park to the south of the village.
- 5.14 I looked at the proposed Green Gaps to the south of the village. In particular I walked along the bridleway to the east of Doncaster Road into the proposed Gap to the south

east of the village. I saw the way in which it related to natural features in the wider landscape.

- 5.15 Thereafter I walked back into the village and looked at the proposed local green spaces to the east of Doncaster Road. I saw the beautifully-painted gates and railings at the cemetery.
- 5.16 I then drove to Hodsock via Carlton to the south. This helped me to understand the landscape setting of the neighbourhood area more fully and the significance of Hodsock Priory in the parish.

## 6 The Neighbourhood Plan and the Basic Conditions

- 6.1 This section of the report deals with the submitted neighbourhood plan as a whole and the extent to which it meets the basic conditions. The submitted Basic Conditions Statement has helped considerably in the preparation of this section of the report. It is a well-presented, informative and professional document.
- 6.2 As part of this process I must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the Basic Conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. To comply with the basic conditions, the Plan must:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
  - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area;
  - be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations; and
  - not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

I assess the Plan against the basic conditions under the following headings.

### *National Planning Policies and Guidance*

- 6.3 For the purposes of this examination the key elements of national policy relating to planning matters are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued earlier this year.
- 6.4 The NPPF sets out a range of core land-use planning principles to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The following are of particular relevance to the Hodsock and Langold Neighbourhood Development Plan:
- a plan led system– in this case the relationship between the neighbourhood plan and the adopted Bassetlaw Core Strategy;
  - delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
  - building a strong, competitive economy;
  - recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving local communities;
  - taking account of the different roles and characters of different areas;
  - highlighting the importance high quality design and good standards of amenity for all future occupants of land and buildings; and
  - conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 6.5 Neighbourhood plans sit within this wider context both generally, and within the more specific presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 13 of the NPPF indicates that neighbourhoods should both develop plans that support the strategic

needs set out in local plans and plan positively to support local development that is outside the strategic elements of the development plan.

- 6.6 In addition to the NPPF I have also taken account of other elements of national planning policy including Planning Practice Guidance and the recent ministerial statements.
- 6.7 Having considered all the evidence and representations available as part of the examination I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to national planning policies and guidance in general terms. It sets out a positive vision for the future of the neighbourhood area. It includes a series of policies that address a range of housing development and environmental matters. The Basic Conditions Statement maps the policies in the Plan against the appropriate sections of the NPPF.
- 6.8 At a more practical level the NPPF indicates that plans should provide a clear framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made and that they should give a clear indication of how a decision-maker should react to a development proposal (paragraph 16d). This was reinforced with the publication of Planning Practice Guidance in March 2014. Paragraph ID:41-041-20140306 indicates that policies in neighbourhood plans should be drafted with sufficient clarity so that a decision-maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Policies should also be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence.
- 6.9 As submitted the Plan does not fully accord with this range of practical issues. The majority of my recommended modifications in Section 7 relate to matters of clarity and precision. They are designed to ensure that the Plan fully accords with national policy.

*Contributing to sustainable development*

- 6.10 There are clear overlaps between national policy and the contribution that the submitted Plan makes to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development has three principal dimensions – economic, social and environmental. It is clear to me that the submitted Plan has set out to achieve sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. In the economic dimension the Plan includes a policy on infill development (Policy 2), design codes (Policy 3) and policies for employment development (Policies 9 and 10). In the social role, it includes a policy on housing mix (Policy 4) and on local green spaces (Policy 6). In the environmental dimension the Plan positively seeks to protect its natural, built and historic environment. It includes specific policies on Green Gaps (Policy 7) and the historic environment (Policy 11). This assessment overlaps with the Parish Council's comments on this matter in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

*General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan*

- 6.11 I have already commented in detail on the development plan context in the wider Bassetlaw District in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 of this report.

- 6.12 I consider that the submitted Plan delivers a local dimension to this strategic context and supplements the detail already included in the adopted Core Strategy. The Basic Conditions Statement helpfully relates the Plan's policies to policies in the Core Strategy. I am satisfied that the submitted Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan.

*European Legislation and Habitat Regulations*

- 6.13 The Neighbourhood Plan General Regulations 2015 require a qualifying body either to submit an environmental report prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 or a statement of reasons why an environmental report is not required. In order to comply with this requirement, a Screening Determination on the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared by Bassetlaw District Council in November 2019. The report is thorough and well-constructed. As a result of this process BDC concluded that the Plan is not likely to have any significant effects on the environment and accordingly would not require SEA.
- 6.14 The screening report includes the responses from the three consultation bodies. This is best practice.
- 6.15 BDC also prepared a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Plan at the same time. The report is very thorough and comprehensive. In particular it assesses the likely effects of the implementation of the policies in the Plan on the following sites:
- Birklands and Bilhaugh SAC;
  - Hatfield Moor SAC;
  - Thorne Moors SAC;
  - Thorne and Hatfield Moors SPA; and
  - the potential Sherwood Forest SPA

It concludes that the neighbourhood plan will not give rise to likely significant effects on European sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and Appropriate Assessment is not required.

- 6.16 Having reviewed the information provided to me as part of the examination I am satisfied that a proportionate process has been undertaken in accordance with the various regulations. None of the statutory consultees have raised any concerns with regard to either neighbourhood plan or to European obligations. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I am entirely satisfied that the submitted Plan is compatible with this aspect of European obligations.
- 6.17 In a similar fashion I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and that it complies with the Human Rights Act. There is no evidence that has been submitted to me to suggest otherwise. There has been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to take part in the preparation of the

Plan and to make their comments known. On this basis, I conclude that the submitted Plan does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with the ECHR.

*Summary*

- 6.18 On the basis of my assessment of the Plan in this section of my report I am satisfied that it meets the basic conditions subject to the incorporation of the recommended modifications contained in this report. Section 7 assesses each policy against the basic conditions. Where necessary it recommends modifications on a policy-by-policy basis.

## 7 The Neighbourhood Plan policies

- 7.1 This section of the report comments on the policies in the Plan. In particular, it makes a series of recommended modifications to ensure that the various policies have the necessary precision to meet the basic conditions.
- 7.2 My recommendations focus on the policies themselves given that the basic conditions relate primarily to this aspect of neighbourhood plans. In some cases, I have also recommended changes to the associated supporting text.
- 7.3 I am satisfied that the content and the form of the Plan is fit for purpose. It is distinctive and proportionate to the Plan area. The wider community and the Parish Council have spent time and energy in identifying the issues and objectives that they wish to be included in their Plan. This sits at the heart of the localism agenda.
- 7.4 The Plan has been designed to reflect Planning Practice Guidance (41-004-20170728) which indicates that neighbourhood plans must address the development and use of land.
- 7.5 I have addressed the policies in the order that they appear in the submitted plan.
- 7.6 For clarity this section of the report comments on all policies whether or not I have recommended modifications in order to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions.
- 7.7 Where modifications are recommended to policies they are highlighted in bold print. Any associated or free-standing changes to the text of the Plan are set out in italic print.

### *The initial sections of the Plan (Sections 1-8)*

- 7.8 The Plan as a whole is well-organised and includes effective maps, tables and photographs. It makes an appropriate distinction between the policies and their supporting text. Its design will ensure that it will comfortably be able to take its place as part of the development plan in the event that it is eventually 'made'. The initial elements of the Plan set the scene for the policies. They are proportionate to the Plan area and the subsequent policies.
- 7.9 Sections 1 and 2 comment about the background to neighbourhood planning. They also helpfully describe the local planning context within which the Plan has been prepared. It includes an effective map showing the designated neighbourhood area. Section 2 summarises how the submitted Plan was prepared. It overlaps with the submitted Consultation Statement.
- 7.10 Section 3 comments about the special and distinctive features of the neighbourhood area. It is a particularly successful part of the Plan. It provides detailed information about the history and character of the parish in general, and Langold in particular. It then provides a position statement about the parish and includes detailed information on economic well-being and recent investment and regeneration initiatives.

- 7.11 Section 4 comments about key issues facing the neighbourhood area. Figure 5 then sets out its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
- 7.12 Sections 5 and 6 set out the Plan's Community Vision and the supporting Community Objectives respectively. They are both well-developed and distinctive to the neighbourhood area as described in Sections 3 and 4. Figure 6 in Section 7 is particularly effective in the way in which it relates the objectives to resultant policies.
- 7.13 Section 8 introduces the concept of sustainable development to good effect.
- 7.14 The remainder of this section of the report addresses each policy in turn in the context set out in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.7 of this report.

#### Policy 1 Housing in Langold

- 7.15 This policy sets the scene for development in the neighbourhood area up to 2037. It takes account both of the existing development plan context (as provided by the Core Strategy) and the emerging Local Plan. In particular it comments about two extant planning permissions for residential development to the north of Langold.
- 7.16 The policy is underpinned by comprehensive supporting text in Section 9 of the Plan. It explains the way in which extant planning permissions will deliver the strategic housing growth for the Plan period and in accordance with the strategic approach included in the emerging Local Plan.
- 7.17 The policy has three related parts. The first sets out the minimum delivery of new homes in the Plan period. The second identifies the context within which any additional homes would be delivered. The third comments about the importance of monitoring the implementation of a 'made' neighbourhood plan. It also comments about, where necessary, taking corrective action by way of a review of the Plan.
- 7.18 With detailed modifications I am satisfied that the first and second parts of the policy meet the basic conditions. The third part of the policy is more a statement of fact which overlaps with Section 19 of the Plan. On this basis I recommend that it is deleted from the policy and that it is cross-referenced in both Section 9 and 19 of the Plan.

**In the first part of the policy replace 'on allocated sites...Policy 3' with 'The Plan supports the delivery of Sites 1 and 2 as shown on Figure 7 and through the application of the design principles incorporated in Policy 3 of this Plan'**

**Replace the second part of the policy with 'Other residential development will be supported where it accords with Policy 2 of this Plan'**

**Delete the third part of the policy.**

*Insert an additional paragraph of supporting text (9.7) to read: 'The Parish Council acknowledges the importance of the delivery of these two sites to the overall success of the submitted Plan. On this basis, and to support the delivery of sustainable development, the Plan will be subject to a review if the identified sites in part 1 of this policy have not commenced within five years of the making of the Neighbourhood Plan. The wider monitoring and review of the Plan is addressed in Section 19'*



## Policy 2 Infill Development

- 7.19 This policy comments about infill development within the defined settlement boundary of Langold as defined on figure 7a. It is a criteria-based policy. The criteria are appropriate and distinctive to the neighbourhood area.
- 7.20 However as submitted the policy is a combination of policy and supporting text. I recommend modifications to its approach to remedy this matter. I also recommend that the second part of the policy is incorporated into the substantive part of the policy given that the amenity issues it includes have common relevance. I also recommend a modification to the second criteria so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF. Otherwise it meets the basic conditions.

**Replace the opening element of the first part of the policy with: ‘Proposals for infill development within the settlement boundary of Langold (as shown in Figure 7a) will be supported where they:’**

**Replace criterion b) with: ‘safeguard the integrity of existing garden spaces and the relationship between property sizes and their gardens and wider curtilages’**

**Add an additional criterion to read: ‘provide satisfactory layouts to safeguard the amenities of residential properties in the immediate locality’**

**Delete the second part of the policy.**

## Policy 3 Design Code

- 7.21 This policy complements the approach towards the development of sites 1 and 2 in Policy 1. It establishes a policy approach to underpin the work undertaken on a Design Code for the two sites.
- 7.22 The submitted Design Code is a first-class piece of work. It describes the character of Langold and then provides detailed guidance for the development of the two sites based on four related factors:
- the identification of character areas;
  - proposed urban strategies;
  - streetscape design principles; and
  - landscape design principles.
- 7.23 The policy is based around a series of design principles which naturally originate from the Design Code work. On this basis they are evidence-based and locally-distinctive. In general terms the principles are well-considered. I recommend a series of technical modifications to ensure that they meet the basic conditions. They either bring the clarity required by the NPPF or remove unnecessary supporting text from the policy itself.
- 7.24 I also recommend that the supporting text makes reference to the extant nature of the outline permissions on sites 1 and 2. In this context the policy does not override the basis and integrity of the relevant planning permissions.

- 7.25 The overall effect of the implementation of the policy will assist significantly in ensuring that Sites 1 and 2 are well-designed in general terms, and in a way which respects the distinctive character and history of Langold in particular.

**Replace the first sentence of the policy with: ‘Proposals for the development of Sites 1 and 2 should have regard to the relevant design principles in the Langold Design Code (Appendix 1) and should bring forward their comprehensive development’**

**In the second sentence delete ‘only’**

**In a) replace ‘must’ with ‘should’ and delete ‘not just motor vehicles’. In the second sentence delete ‘It is essential that’**

**In i) delete ‘to reflect the existing residential massing’**

**In j) replace ‘densities’ with ‘the densities of new housing should’**

**In k) replace ‘picturesque’ with ‘attractive’**

**In n) replace ‘front gardens.... incorporated’ with ‘new houses should incorporate front gardens or shared garden spaces’**

**In p) delete ‘to reduce the.... the street’**

*Insert an additional paragraph of supporting text (11.9) to read: ‘Policy 3 has been designed to influence the detailed work that is taking place on the layout and design of the two sites. In this context the policy does not override the basis and integrity of the relevant planning permissions’*

#### Policy 4 Housing Mix

- 7.26 This policy is an important component of the Plan. It comments about the mix of housing that should be included within development proposals. It is comprehensively underpinned by supporting text (in Section 12 of the Plan). The Plan helpfully describes the related housing and social needs of the parish. In particular it highlights that Langold has grown significantly in the last fifty years and has retained a strong sense of community spirit and cohesion. In this context many residents who moved to the area in the 1970s to 1990s are now both older and in need of smaller or more specialist housing. Their children are also finding it difficult to find appropriately sized or priced housing. At the same time there has been a decline in the younger population as people seek cheaper housing and better employment prospects in other areas such as Sheffield and Doncaster.

- 7.27 The policy has five related parts as follows:

- the need for larger developments to include smaller dwellings;
- the distribution of affordable housing units in wider housing proposals;
- the location of new care facilities and accommodation for the elderly;
- the opportunities for multi-use facilities; and

- specific requirements for the two sites with planning permission.

7.28 In general terms I am satisfied that the policy is distinctive to the parish. Its approach will do much to promote sustainable development.

7.29 I recommend a series of modifications to ensure that the Policy meets the basic conditions as follows:

- to use appropriate policy language (in the first part of the policy);
- to provide the necessary clarity for a development plan policy (in the second, third and fourth parts of the policy); and
- to provide a degree of flexibility for development to proceed which already has permission (in the fifth part of the policy).

**In the first part of the policy replace ‘is encouraged with ‘should provide where practicable and viable’**

**In the second part of the policy replace ‘provision is being met’ with ‘is being provided’**

**In the third part of the policy replace ‘possible’ with ‘practicable’**

**In the fourth part of the policy delete ‘which utilise opportunities’ and ‘and thus.... for users’**

**At the beginning of the fifth part of the policy add ‘Where practicable’**

Policy 5 Langold Country Park

7.30 This policy provides a context for future development in and around the Country Park. As the Plan describes Langold Country Park acts as a “green corridor” through the south-western part of the village from Church Lane through to Costhorpe. The park also provides a haven for local wildlife and recreation. It has multiple facilities and spaces for people to use within the park, including a splash pool, play area and skate park. The Park also has a large lake which is used for recreational purposes and has a large coverage of amenity green spaces, woodlands, natural green spaces and a network of public footpaths. I saw the Country Park being well-used by local residents during my visit.

7.31 The policy has two principal elements. The first comments specifically about development proposals within the Country Park. The second incorporates three elements about footpath links between the wider village and the Country Park. With minor modifications the first element meets the basic conditions. The second element of the policy is less clear in its intention and the language used. I recommend modifications to its format so that it would offer support to a series of footpath and connection enhancements.

**In the first part of the policy delete ‘which is identified....(in figure 9)’ and replace ‘consider’ with ‘take into account as appropriate to their scale and nature’**

**In a) replace ‘retain and enhance’ with ‘the retention and enhancement of’**

**In b) replace ‘preserve and enhance’ with ‘the preservation and enhancement of’**

**In c) replace ‘improve’ with ‘the improvement of’**

**In d) replace ‘support’ with ‘supporting’**

**Replace the second element of the policy (2/3/4) with:**

**‘Proposals which would provide new or enhanced footpath connections between the Country Park and Langold village will be supported. Proposals which incorporate any or all of the following enhancements will be particularly supported:**

- **proposals to improve the condition, connection, public realm, lighting and safety of existing alleyways and which would provide better accessibility and connections to other parts of the village.**
- **proposals which provide safe and convenient access for people with disabilities; and**
- **proposals for safe shared facilities for pedestrians and cyclists’**

Policy 6 Local Green Space

- 7.32 This policy proposes the designation of seven local green spaces (LGSs). Paragraph 14.3 comments about the criteria for the designation of LGSs in the NPPF. Paragraph 15.1 of the Plan highlights the three tests in paragraph 100 of the NPPF for LGS designation. They are shown on Figure 10.
- 7.33 On this basis the Parish Council has considered that there are a number of green spaces in the Parish that meet this test and merit special designation and protection. For each green space, a specific assessment has been prepared (in Appendix 3) showing a map of the green space, pictures of the green space, details on ownership and dimensions, and how the green space meets the criteria of the NPPF and why it is special to the local community. In general terms they are recreation and amenity areas. In specific terms LGS6 is the cemetery, and LGS7 is the fascinating Miners memorial amenity space off Doncaster Road.
- 7.34 The Plan acknowledges that proposals for associated buildings, spaces and fixtures and fittings may come forward within the Plan period which would enhance the six spaces for public use. It recognises that this will be a matter for the District Council to assess on a case-by-case basis. Whilst built development would conflict with Local Green Space designation there may well be exceptional circumstances that would allow such proposals to achieve planning permission.
- 7.35 On the basis of this information and my own observations I am satisfied that six of the proposed LGSs meet the NPPF criteria. In particular they are demonstrably special to the local community. In addition, they contribute to the open, spacious and planned character of Langold. I recommend the deletion of LGS5 (the former Goldthorpe Avenue football pitch) as it has now been developed for residential purposes.

- 7.36 The NPPF also requires that LGS designations should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan Period. I am satisfied that both of these important considerations are met in the submitted Plan. The proposed LGSs feature within a neighbourhood area which already has two large housing commitments as part of its contribution towards the strategic delivery of housing in the District. In addition, there is no evidence to suggest that the six LGSs are incapable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period. Indeed, in many cases they are established elements of the local environment and are sensitively managed as green spaces by public bodies.
- 7.37 The policy correctly applies the matter-of-fact approach to the designated LGSs. However, I recommend that the final element of the policy about the development of flood resilience schemes in LGSs is deleted. This will be a matter for BDC to determine on a case-by-case basis rather than through the application of a policy approach.

**In the first part of the policy delete LGS5 (and renumber accordingly)**

**Delete the third part of the policy**

*Delete LGS5 from Figure 10*

**Policy 7 Green Gaps**

- 7.38 This policy proposes the designation of green gaps in the neighbourhood area. Two are proposed to the north of Langold (to maintain a green gap between the village and Oldcotes) and two to the south of Langold (to maintain a green gap between the village and Carlton). They are shown on Figures 11 and 12.
- 7.39 The Plan comments about the way in which Langold sits in the wider landscape in general terms, and the potential for its coalescence with settlements both to the north and to the south (outside the neighbourhood area) in particular.
- 7.40 Whilst the supporting text in Section 15 does not directly address the issue it is clear that the two proposed green gaps to the north of the village (Figure 12) have been designed to sit to the immediate north of sites 1 and 2 which have planning permission for major housing developments (as shown on Figure 7).
- 7.41 In its response to the clarification note the Parish Council commented about the way in which it had sought to develop its policy approach to follow the approach in the emerging Bassetlaw Local Plan. Policy ST34 of that Plan identifies a series of Green Gaps in the wider District. One of the proposed Gaps in that Plan is Gap GG2 (Oldcotes – Langold - Carlton in Lindrick). Details about the proposed policy approach in the emerging Local Plan are set out in the accompanying Green Gaps Study. The proposed Green Gaps in the neighbourhood area are significant elements of the proposed (and larger) Green Gap 2 in the emerging Local Plan.
- 7.42 Whilst the basic conditions require that I examine the Plan against adopted local policies (in this case the Core Strategy) Planning Practice Guidance (41-009-20190509) comments that ‘where a neighbourhood plan is brought forward before an

up-to-date local plan is in place the qualifying body and the local planning authority should discuss and aim to agree the relationship between policies in the emerging neighbourhood plan, the emerging local plan (or spatial development strategy and the adopted development plan with appropriate regard to national policy and guidance'. In this context I have taken account of the approach towards Green Gaps against that in the emerging Local Plan.

- 7.43 I looked at the proposed Green Gaps carefully when I visited the neighbourhood area. I saw the way in which they sit within the wider landscape. In particular I saw the way in which the proposed Gaps to the north of Langold would relate to scale, nature and location of the two consented residential sites to the north of the village. I also took account of the helpful response from the Parish Council to the clarification note questions about the extent to which the proposed Gaps would have readily defined natural or man-made boundaries.
- 7.44 On the basis of all the evidence I am satisfied that the two proposed Green Gaps to the south of the village of Langold are appropriate and would serve a particular and distinctive role within the neighbourhood area. They follow natural boundaries in general, and a natural stream to the south and Langold Country Park and the built boundary of Langold to the North in particular. They also highlight the difference between the setting of Carlton to the south and Langold to the north. This is particularly highlighted by the extensive views of Hodssock Manor on rising ground from the south.
- 7.45 I am also satisfied that the element of the proposed green gaps to the north of Langold and to the west of Doncaster Road are appropriate and would serve a particular and distinctive role within the neighbourhood area. In this case they would dovetail with the extant planning permissions to the immediate north of Langold and would retain an open element of open landscape between Langold and Oldcotes.
- 7.46 The policy itself has three parts. The first designates the areas concerned as Green Gaps. The second explains the purposes of the proposed Green Gaps. The third comments that development will not be supported within a Green Gap which would conflict with the purposes of their designation.
- 7.47 Whilst I understand the approach taken it incorporates a degree of both policy and supporting text. I recommend a modification to combine the second and third parts of the policy. I also recommend that the significant element of supporting text in the submitted policy is repositioned into the existing supporting text in Section 15 of the Plan.
- 7.48 The recommended modification refers specifically to built development. This approach acknowledges that the potential use of the parcels of land for open and/or recreational uses would safeguard the wider ambitions of the policy. For clarity I also recommend a modification to the supporting text to identify that the neighbourhood plan policy only applies within the neighbourhood area.

**Replace the second and third parts of the policy with:**

**‘Proposals for built development within the identified Green Gaps will be carefully-controlled. Development will only be supported where it would retain the separate identity and character of Langold Village and its relationship with settlements to the north and south of the neighbourhood area’**

*At the end of paragraph 15.2 add: ‘The policy overlaps with the broader approach for Green Gaps in the District in the emerging Local Plan. However, for clarity Policy 7 in this Plan will apply only within the neighbourhood area’*

*At the end of paragraph 15.3 add: ‘Policy 7 provides a basis for safeguarding this important aspect of the neighbourhood area. It designates a series of Green Gaps. The Green Gaps have been identified to fulfil the following roles and functions:*

- *the prevention of the potential merging of Langold and Carlton in Lindrick and Costhorpe (to the south) and Oldcotes (to the north);*
- *preserving the settlements’ separate identity and local character; and*
- *the provision of an accessible recreational resource, with both informal and formal opportunities, close to where people live*

Policy 8 Neighbourhood Centre

- 7.49 This policy comments about future development at the Doncaster Road neighbourhood shopping centre along Doncaster Road in Langold. It is a traditional local shopping centre and provides a wider range of retail, commercial and community facilities. I saw that it was well-used by the local community when I visited the parish. Its uses in December 2019 are helpfully shown on Figure 13.
- 7.50 The policy has two parts. The first comments about proposed changes of use from Class A use to other uses. The second offers support for the development of new or improved shopfronts.
- 7.51 The first part of the policy seeks to safeguard the existing retail and retail-related uses in the neighbourhood centre. The Plan comments that NPPF paragraphs 91 and 92 encourage plans to promote strong neighbourhood centres and plan positively for local shops and community facilities to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. The Parish Council considers that retail provision is an asset to the village and it is important that the existing retail provision is protected and enhanced to support a growing and sustainable community.
- 7.52 Plainly this is a key matter for the well-being of the wider community. Nevertheless, as submitted the policy fails to take account of the complex range of permitted development rights both within the Class A uses (as identified in the Use Classes Order) and between different elements of the Order. To address this matter, I recommend that the policy acknowledges the various permitted development rights. I recommend that this matter is referenced in the supporting text as a context to the policy itself.

- 7.53 I also recommend that the concentration of hot food takeaways is made more explicit to the separate parts of the neighbourhood centre. Whilst it appears as a single centre it comfortably breaks down into defined sections.
- 7.54 The second part of the policy is generally appropriate. Nevertheless, I recommend that it is reconfigured so that it supports shopfronts which reflect the character and appearance of the host building. Otherwise the submitted policy would have the unintended effect of supporting poorly-designed shopfronts.

**At the beginning of the first part of the policy add: ‘Insofar as planning permission is required’**

**In the first part of the policy replace ‘ad’ with ‘and’**

**In a) replace ‘one’ with ‘any one section of the’ and delete ‘or in close proximity to each other’**

**In b) replace ‘detrimental’ with ‘unacceptable’**

**Replace the second part of the policy with:**

**‘Proposals for new or improved shopfronts within the neighbourhood centre will be supported which respect and complement the character and appearance of the host building’**

*At the end of paragraph 16.5 add: ‘Policy 8 takes account of the complex range of permitted development rights both within the Class A uses (as identified in the Use Classes Order) and between different elements of the Order’*

Policy 9 Employment Development

- 7.55 This policy offers support to small scale employment development within the development boundary of Langold subject to a series of criteria. In general terms the criteria are both appropriate and distinctive to the parish.
- 7.56 The second criterion is that the development should not be larger than 0.5 hectares in size. In its response to the clarification note the Parish Council suggested that this figure could be increased to 1 hectare. However, given the way in which the settlement boundary has been drawn around Langold I have concluded that any such prescriptive approach is unnecessary. I recommend that the criterion is modified so that it becomes more general, and related to the specific circumstances of any potential site and its immediate surroundings.
- 7.57 I also recommend the deletion of the word ‘only’ from the policy. It gives the policy a negative rather than a positive approach. This is particularly important given the wider regeneration initiatives which are taking place in both the District and the parish. In any event ‘only’ is unnecessary within the context of a criteria-based policy.

**Delete ‘only’**



**Replace b) with ‘the development is small in scale and relates well to its immediate surroundings’**

Policy 10 Economic development outside the development boundary

- 7.58 This policy continues the approach taken in the previous policy. In this case it addresses proposals for economic development outside the identified settlement boundary of Langold.
- 7.59 It has two related parts. The first supports new economic development subject to a series of criteria. The second comments about the siting and design requirements for proposed new buildings. In general terms I am satisfied that the approach taken meets the basic conditions. In particular it has regard to the supporting context for such development in Section 6 of the NPPF.
- 7.60 In the first part of the policy I recommend that the schedule of proposed uses is removed from the policy and relocated into the supporting text. As submitted the policy would exclude uses other than those in the schedule. I also recommend detailed modifications to the second part of the policy. Otherwise it meets the basic conditions.

**In the first part of the policy replace ‘All proposals’ with ‘Proposals’**

**In the first part of the policy delete ‘for permanent.... or enterprises’**

**In the second part of the policy replace ‘be broken up using’ with ‘be designed so that their different components use’**

*At the end of paragraph 17.2 add: ‘Policy 10 seeks to complement this approach. Proposals for permanent or temporary holiday overnight accommodation, tourist attractions, static caravans, equine facilities, or businesses relating to rural activities or enterprises will be particularly supported where they meet the criteria in the policy’*

Policy 11 Historic Environment

- 7.61 This policy celebrates the historic environment of the parish. As the Plan comments the historic environment is important for its own sake. It is also central to the character and identity of the parish. It is a source of immense local pride, as well as being a valuable educational and economic resource. The historic environment should also act as a stimulus and inspiration to place-making in all parts of the parish so that it can reinforce local identity and play a part in increasing the appeal of the area as a place to live, work and visit. Appendix 2 of the Plan documents its non-designated assets.
- 7.62 The policy has three related parts. The first provides general policy advice. The second makes a connection with national policy. The second and third parts provide detailed commentary on the details to be included in any heritage impact assessments.
- 7.63 I recommend that the reference to national policy is deleted. There is no need for a neighbourhood plan to make this connection. I also recommend that the third part of the policy is deleted and repositioned into the supporting text. This reflects that it is procedural advice rather than policy. I also recommend that on the heritage impact

assessment matter the Plan should include a reference to the relevant BDC policy note.

**In the first section of the second part of the policy replace ‘Proposals should.... guidance and’ with ‘Development proposals which would directly affect a heritage asset or its setting should be accompanied with a Heritage Impact Assessment’**

**In the two Justification sections replace ‘will’ with should’**

**Delete Section 3 of the policy.**

*At the end of paragraph 18.5 add:*

*‘Policy 11 provides a context for this important matter. Where applicants are preparing any required heritage impact assessment, they should refer to the BDC Guide to Heritage Impact Assessments (2011/updated 2013). Heritage statements should consider the setting of heritage assets. In considering the effect a development proposal may have on the setting of a heritage asset, the District Council will assess the contribution the setting makes to the overall significance of the asset and how the proposal may impact on the asset’*

Other Matters - General

- 7.64 This report has recommended a series of modifications both to the policies and to the supporting text in the submitted Plan. Where consequential changes to the text are required directly as a result of my recommended modification to the policy concerned, I have highlighted them in this report. However other changes to the general text may be required elsewhere in the Plan as a result of the recommended modifications to the policies. It will be appropriate for BDC and the Parish Council to have the flexibility to make any necessary consequential changes to the general text. This flexibility applies to any changes in policy numbering which the Parish Council may wish to make to take account of the recommended modifications elsewhere in this report. I recommend accordingly.

*Modification of general text (where necessary) to achieve consistency with the modified policies.*

Other Matters – Specific

- 7.65 Neighbourhood plans are required both to identify the neighbourhood area and to define the Plan period in a clear and transparent fashion. As submitted the Plan needs a degree of refinement to ensure that the second of these important matters is addressed satisfactorily.
- 7.66 The Plan is otherwise clear that it intends to correspond with the Plan period for the emerging Local Plan (2037). It is addressed on the front cover. For clarity I recommend that the Plan period is made explicit in Section 1.

*At the end of paragraph 1.2 add: 'The Plan period is 2020 to 2037. It has been designed to correspond with the Plan period for the emerging Bassetlaw Local Plan'*

#### Implementation and Review

- 7.67 Section 19 of the Plan properly comments about the need for monitoring of any 'made' neighbourhood plan. It also recognises that a review of the Plan may be required at some point within the Plan period.
- 7.68 The submitted Plan has been prepared within the context of a development plan context that pre-dates the introduction of the NPPF. BDC is now working towards the preparation of a new Local Plan. It is anticipated that the emerging Local Plan will be adopted in 2021. This process will be an important milestone in the development of planning policy in the District.
- 7.69 In these circumstances I recommend that the submitted neighbourhood plan includes more specific commentary about the potential impact of the adoption of the emerging local plan. Plainly the Parish Council will need to consider the potential impact at that time and reach its own view on the need or otherwise for a review of any made neighbourhood plan. I recommend that this is achieved by the replacement of paragraph 19.8. As submitted, it suggests a review of any made neighbourhood plan within five years of the eventual adoption of the emerging Local Plan. In practical terms that may be too late to address any issues which may arise.
- 7.70 I also recommend that this part of the Plan addresses the potential where development does not proceed as planned on the broader package of housing sites with extant planning permission.

*At the end of paragraph 19.2 add: 'In particular the Parish Council will consider a review of the Plan if the broader package of housing sites identified in the Plan does not come forward'*

*Replace paragraph 19.8 with: 'The adoption of the Bassetlaw Local Plan 2037 will be a key milestone in this process. In this context the Parish Council will consider the need for a review of the neighbourhood plan at that point. This task will be undertaken based on an assessment of developments that have taken place in general, and the delivery of the identified housing sites in particular'*

## 8 Summary and Conclusions

### *Summary*

- 8.1 The Plan sets out a range of policies to guide and direct development proposals in the period up to 2037. It is distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community to safeguard the character and setting of the neighbourhood area and its community facilities and to promote sensitive new development.
- 8.2 Following my independent examination of the Plan I have concluded that the Hodsock and Langold Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the basic conditions for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan subject to a series of recommended modifications.

### *Conclusion*

- 8.3 On the basis of the findings in this report I recommend to Bassetlaw District Council that subject to the incorporation of the modifications set out in this report that the Hodsock and Langold Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum.

### *Other Matters*

- 8.4 I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Plan area. In my view, the neighbourhood area is entirely appropriate for this purpose and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore recommend that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the neighbourhood area as approved by Bassetlaw District Council on 18 December 2015.
- 8.5 I am grateful to everyone who has helped in any way to ensure that this examination has run in a smooth manner at a very challenging time.

**Andrew Ashcroft**  
**Independent Examiner**  
**22 June 2020**