

Wallingford Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

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 continues to provide a distinctive vision for the neighbourhood area. Its presentation is very good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is clear.

The Town Council's ambition to review the Plan responds positively to national guidance and associated best practice. The Modifications Statement helpfully describes the scale and nature of the proposed updates and revisions to the Plan. This is best practice.

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 Town 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.

General

The Basic Conditions Statement advises that the review of the Plan retains the same Plan period as that of the made Plan (up to 2035) and to ensure conformity with policies in the adopted Local Plan. In this context, does the Town Council anticipate the potential need for a further review of the Plan to respond to the contents of the emerging Joint Local Plan?

Several developers assert that the proposed review of the Plan is unnecessary and/or that it has not been positively prepared. I would appreciate the Town Council's comments on these representations and, more generally, the way in which it has approached the review of the Plan.

Policy WS2

Policy W2.2 proposes a practical and agreed approach towards the use of land previously safeguarded for a school for a new medical centre.

Nevertheless, it would be helpful if the Town Council would clarify the commentary in the policy that any associated housing 'should ensure that specialist housing needs for older and disabled people locally have been met' and in the associated supporting text in paragraph 2.6.6. Is the approach related to a general need for housing for older people, the proximity to the proposed medical centre (or both)?

Policy WS3

Map 3 is produced at a scale which makes it difficult to identify the exact location of the built-up area boundary. I will be recommending that this matter is addressed should the Plan proceed to referendum.

How does the proposed built-up area boundary relate to the area highlighted on Figure 1 of the representation made by the owners of land and buildings between Lower Wharf and St Lucian's Lane in Wallingford (Representation 7).

Appendix H helpfully describes the way in which the proposed built-up area boundary has been defined. I note the comments in Section H14. Nevertheless:

- is the final sentence of that section appropriate for a document which provides a justification for the definition of the built-up area boundary? and
- does that sentence pre-judge any decisions which the District Council would make on planning applications (here or elsewhere in the town) outside the built-up area boundary based on the details of Policy WS3.2 of the Plan and site-specific details?

Representations

It would be helpful if the Town Council responded to the representations from:

- the owners of land between Lower Wharf and St Lucian's Lane (Representation 7);
- Oxfordshire County Council (Representation 9);
- L&Q Estates (Representation 11);
- Croudace Homes (Representation 13);
- David Wilson Homes (Representation 15);
- Nicholas King Homes (Representation 16);
- the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (Representation 17); and
- Berkeley Homes (Representation 19)

The District Council (Representation 14) suggests a series of revisions to some of the policies and parts of the general text. It would be helpful if the Town Council responded to the various issues raised.

Does the Town Council wish to comment on any other representation made to the Plan?

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 10 September 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 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.

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Independent Examiner

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