

Longhope Neighbourhood Plan

Examiner's response to Parish Council comments

Context

This Note has been prepared within the context of the LPC commentary on certain policies in the fact check report.

I am grateful for the support for the report itself. This Note has been prepared within the spirit of the LPC note. It has also been designed, where necessary, to be used as part of your explanation of the outcome of the examination process to the local community in the lead up to the referendum. By way of overall clarification, the examination process is very confined. I have to examine the Plan as submitted. The only modifications that I can make are those necessary to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions. I cannot directly improve or change the Plan. It is however widely acknowledged that in most cases the recommended modifications indirectly improve the Plan.

Your questions are reproduced in black text. My responses are set out in blue

Policy Queries

A. Policy H1b. Affordable Housing

Whilst we appreciate that the FoDDC has procedures in place to address this matter, given the evidence from the Longhope Housing Needs Survey and the feedback from our questionnaire both of which showed there was a need for Affordable Housing, would it be possible to somehow emphasise this need?

The recommended modification does not seek to detract either from your local evidence or the approach adopted. Nevertheless, it reflects the current position of national policy on this important matter. National policy has been refined in recent years and has been tested in the courts. Longhope is in the relatively fortunate place that the parish is identified as a 'rural area'. This allows FoDDC to apply a lower threshold than the national figure.

B. Policy H1e. Developer Contributions

If, in the future, the FoDDC does introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy, we would like the Policy to contain some indication that the Parish Council will have some say in the disbursement of the 25% of CIL revenues. In other words, could we retain the aspiration of the last sentence of our Policy viz. *"The Parish Council will prioritise any general financial contribution towards the projects considered appropriate at the time."*

Again, I agree with the sentiments of the approach set out in the submitted Plan. However there needs to be a direct relationship between the development concerned and the requirement for a contribution towards community facilities. This is reflected in the recommended modification. It also reflects local (FoDDC) circumstances.

C. Policy H1f. Size of Housing Developments

It was the deletion of this policy which caused most angst among our members. We appreciate that we had no proof that more than 10 units would cause harm to other policy objectives and could only be treated as an arbitrary number i.e. a guide line only. We are happy to have several small-scale developments as per CSP16 and for which there is strong community support. The School Lane development application, and its predecessors, pre-dates the NDP. We had hoped that from now on any development would be small in scale. Could we, for instance, have a policy which gave a guide line maximum of 10 units unless it demonstrated how the following factors have been taken into account: affordable housing,

facilities and services, public and private spaces, external storage and amenity space, car parking, public transport etc., etc.?

The lack of evidence was the key issue in determining the recommended modification. In any event the approach in the submitted Plan would potentially have allowed greater levels of development than that anticipated in the adopted Core Strategy.

D. Policy H1g. Density of Housing

We were worried that the phrase “unacceptable impact” is very subjective.

This will be a matter of judgement for FoDDC on a case by case basis. The word ‘unacceptable’ reflects that all schemes will have some impact. The judgement is the extent to which the impact is unacceptable.

E. Policy E1d. Reuse of Farm Buildings

We have no objection to redundant farm buildings being converted into residential accommodation. Our clarification note did not make this clear.

This point is acknowledged. Nevertheless, the Plan has to be examined as submitted. I treated the policy as an employment-related policy given its position in the Plan. FoDDC would approach any residential conversion on a policy and case-by-case basis

F. Policy AM1c. Access and Parking for the School

I note that in your Examination Report for Hardwicke your modification for their policy CT1 includes the sentence “Where proposed development that attracts high levels of traffic at certain times should provide for car parking and drop off facilities either within the site or within close proximity to the facility.” I realise Longhope and Hardwicke are not comparable situations, but should Hopebrook School expand to accommodate more pupils, could we not have a similar policy?

As you comment the two Plans raise different sets of circumstances. In the case of Longhope AM1c was far too restrictive and onerous. As I comment in the main report the deletion of the policy does not prevent its ambitions from being achieved on a case by case basis in the future.

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31/8/2017