

Gamlingay 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 clear and concise vision for the neighbourhood area. The relationship between the objectives of the Plan and its policies (as shown in the Executive Summary) is very clear. This provides a robust structure for the Plan. In the body of the Plan the 'At a Glance' sections are equally helpful.

The Plan is underpinned by an excellent range of background documents. The Landscape and Visual Analysis is particularly helpful and directly informs some of the policies in the Plan.

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

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 in a position to raise issues for clarification both with the Parish Council.

The comments made on the points in this Note will be used to assist in the preparation of the examination 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 GAM1

The approach in the policy is both ambitious and well-intended.

However, does it conflict with the contents of the Written Ministerial Statement 2015?

Policy GAM2

Is the policy needed given that outline planning permission has been granted for the site off West Road?

In any event does Map 8 need to show the drawings associated with that outline planning permission?

Policy GAM3

The policy is an important element of the Plan.

Did the Parish Council make a deliberate decision to incorporate a series of overlapping matters into one policy?

As I read the policy it has four separate elements as follows:

- local character (the first bullet point);
- the location of housing in the village (the second bullet point);
- the safeguarding of a gap between settlements (the second bullet point); and
- key views (the second bullet point)

I am minded to recommend that these elements become separate policies (with any required modifications). Does the Parish Council have any observations on this proposition?

Policy GAM4

The policy takes a positive approach towards safeguarding employment sites in general terms. However, on the broader range of uses proposed on a site-by-site basis does the Parish Council wish to comment on the District Council's observations about the Use Classes Order?

However, given its location and access point is the Church Street site suitable for continued employment uses?

On what basis has the 25% expansion threshold been selected for the two sites in Drove Road?

Policy GAM5

Am I correct in my reading of the policy that it has been designed to cover the wider area and not just the existing parcels of land which are in employment uses?

If so, does the second part of the policy seek to mitigate some of the implications of additional growth in this part of the neighbourhood area?

Has the Parish Council considered the likely new employment floorspace which may come forward as a result of the policy and the environmental and traffic generation effects of new development in the wider area?

In any event is this part of the neighbourhood area a sustainable location for new employment development?

Policy GAM7

I saw the nature of the former playing fields and their relationship with the former School buildings (to the east) and the new housing (to the west) during the visit.

Has the Parish Council undertaken a detailed assessment of the proposed Local Green Space against the contents of paragraphs 101/102 of the NPPF?

Policy GAM8

I saw the importance and significance of the former School buildings during the visit.

Has the Parish Council assessed the proposed uses in the policy for their commercial viability? Is the implication of the policy that other uses would not be supported?

What is meant by 'safeguarding'?

Policy GAM10

To what extent does the Parish Council consider that the policy has regard to the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations?

What is the evidence for the costs included in the policy?

Policy GAM12

I saw the importance of the Wood during the visit and the overall intention of the policy is clear.

However, is the policy necessary given that the wider spatial strategy of the Plan does not propose development coming forward in its immediate vicinity?

Could the setting of the Wood be safeguarded in a more general way without the definition of a specific cordon?

Representations

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

In particular, does it wish to comment on the representations made by:

- South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- Cambridgeshire County Council;
- Wyboston Lakes Limited;
- LJA Miers Pension Fund;
- Merton College;
- O'Donovan Holdings; and
- Mr J Richardson.

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 7 January 2022. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It is intended to maintain the momentum of the examination on the one hand, whilst taking account of the forthcoming Christmas/New Year period on the other hand.

In the event that certain responses are available before others, I would be 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

Gamlingay Neighbourhood Development Plan.

9 December 2021