

Ashwell 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 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. Its strength is its very sharp focus on a distinctive series of issues.

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 high-quality maps and photographs.

A key element of the Plan is the way in which its objectives and evidence directly inform and underpin the resulting policies. The approach taken provides assurance to all concerned that the Plan has addressed key local issues.

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 with the Parish 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 ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions.

I set out specific clarification points below in the order in which they appear in the submitted Plan:

Policy ASH1

In general terms this policy takes an appropriate approach towards development.

In terms of its details, how does the Parish Council intend that the District Council would apply Part B of the policy? In any event, does it respect the approach taken in Policy SP2 of the emerging Local Plan?

Policy ASH3

This is a well-constructed policy.

Policy ASH4

This is another good policy. In this case, it addresses the increasingly important design agenda in the 2021 version of the NPPF.

Policy ASH5

To what extent does the policy add any distinctive parish value to national and local policies?

Policy ASH6

To what extent does this policy overlap with the responsibilities of other organisations and the requirements of the Building Regulations?

Policy ASH9

I saw several of the views during the visit. They have been carefully-chosen.

As I read the policy, section A is the policy element and sections B and C are effectively supporting text. The Parish Council's comments on this observation would be appreciated.

Policy ASH 10

The policy takes a comprehensive approach to its subject matter.

Policy ASH11

The policy takes a comprehensive approach to its subject matter

However, as I read the policy section A and B is the policy and sections C and D are effectively supporting text.

The Parish Council's comments on this observation would be appreciated.

Policy ASH13

The policy takes a comprehensive approach to its subject matter.

What is meant by 'flexible terms' in Part A of the policy?

In any event, are business letting arrangements land use in their nature?

Policy ASH15

I saw the interesting range of retail and commercial uses in the village centre. As the Plan comments, the 2020 Use Classes Order has made an approach towards their future uses more challenging.

In this context are paragraphs 9.19 and 9.20 of the Plan the driving forces behind the policy?

How would part A of the policy work in practice? In particular, how would the District Council define an appropriate balance of uses?

Policy ASH16

As submitted, the policy could be read in two ways. The first is that it supports (unspecified) development which would provide new or extended recreational facilities. The second is that it supports proposals to provide new or extended recreational facilities.

Which is the correct interpretation of the policy?

Is Part B of the policy supporting text rather than policy?

Policy ASH20

This is generally a good policy

However, should Part B be applied on a proportionate basis? As submitted, it would apply to all minor and domestic proposals and where the requirements of the policy would be both impracticable and unreasonable.

Policy ASH21

The intention of the first part of the policy is understandable. However, might it have unintended consequences?

Is the second sentence of Part A of the policy supporting text?

Is Part B of the policy practicable? In addition, might it have unintended consequences?

Policy ASH22

Might Part D of the policy have unintended consequences?

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 representation from the District Council?

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses to the questions in this note by 22 September 2021. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It is intended to maintain the momentum of the examination.

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

Ashwell Neighbourhood Development Plan.

8 September 2021