

Brize Norton 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 vision for the neighbourhood area which is underpinned by distinctive objectives.

The presentation of the Plan is good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is clear. The Plan makes good use of various maps and high-quality photographs. Sections 5 and 6 of the Plan helpfully comment about the challenges faced by the parish and the resulting vision and objectives of the Plan

The Plan is underpinned by a comprehensive package of appendices. 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 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:

General

The Plan is largely silent on its relationship with the emerging Local Plan. This has attracted commentary from the development industry. Please can the Parish Council comment on its approach to this matter

On a related point, Section 8 comments positively about the implementation and monitoring of the Plan. However, does the Parish Council have any intentions to undertake a review of the Plan (if necessary) once the emerging Local Plan Review has been adopted? Could such an approach be weaved into the proposed twelve-month review cycle in Section 8 of the Plan?

Policy CLH1

In general terms this is a good policy.

The policy advises that development proposals will be assessed against all relevant development plan policies. In this context, I am minded to recommend modifications to the policy so that it sets out its various requirements as matters to be addressed by development proposals rather than to comment that proposals will be supported. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

There appears to be a conflict between the supporting text and the policy. The former comments that the Plan does not seek to protect all the views listed in Appendix 9 and a limited number of Key Views that are specifically required to be protected are set out in Policy CLH2. The latter comments that where existing views encompass character as identified in appendix

9 (including existing views within the village, as well as to and from the village and of the wider parish), layout designs should show how these have been integrated and, where not possible, what mitigation can be delivered.

Is this an error, or is it related to the comment about 'character' in the policy? If it is the latter, how would a developer and the District Council be able to identify which views (beyond those identified in Policy CH/2) encompass elements of the 'character' of the neighbourhood area?

Policy CLH2

In general terms the policy takes a balanced and non-prescriptive approach

How have the nine views identified in the policy been selected from the 34 views identified in Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix 8)?

Policy CLH3

Plainly this is an important policy in the Plan.

The significance of the proposed Strategic Buffer Zones (and the wording used) is such that the approach could be seen as of a strategic rather than a parish nature. Furthermore, whilst the Strategic Buffer Zones and the Area of sensitivity to change have different purposes, the effect of the policy on the two separate designations is similar. In addition, what is the specific thinking behind the identification of the Area of sensitivity to change when several other parts of the neighbourhood area could be seen as sensitive to change (either because of the relationship between Brize Norton and the surrounding countryside, or because of the relationship between Brize Norton and the RAF base and/or Carterton).

It would be helpful if the Parish Council elaborates on its approach to these matters.

Do the various Zones/Area need to be defined and drawn on a map base or could the matters be expressed more generally?

In relation to proposed Strategic Buffer Zone B, do the various numbered sub-areas suggest that the Zone is already safeguarded by the series of strategic recreation and sustainable drainage facilities?

It would be helpful if the Parish Council responded to the comments from the District Council on the detailed elements of the policy.

Policy CLH4

This is a good policy which is underpinned by Design Guide. In the round, it is a very good local response to Section 12 of the NPPF.

For clarity, in ii is the reference to 'areas' related to the 'character areas' in the Assessment?

Policy CLH5

In general terms this is a good policy

In ii the reference to the Hamilton-Baillie Associates document reads out of context both to the policy and to the parish. I am minded to recommend that it is relocated to the supporting text. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Criterion iv is supporting text rather than a land use policy. I am minded to recommend that it is relocated to the supporting text. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy ENV1

The policy takes a positive approach towards the designation of local green spaces. It is underpinned by the comprehensive details in Appendix 27.

The final paragraph of the policy is supporting text. I am minded to recommend that it is relocated to the supporting text. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy CF1

Does this policy bring any added value beyond the relevant policies in the Local Plan and the District Council's general approach to the delivery of infrastructure?

Policy SD1

The initial sentence of the policy reads as a comment rather than as a land use policy. In addition, the District Council will give appropriate weight in the development management process to the various material planning considerations listed as criteria in the policy.

In this context, I am minded to recommend that the policy retains the various issues whilst referring to them as important matters for contributing to the local delivery of sustainable development whilst acknowledging that all the matters will not necessarily apply to each planning application. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Representations

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

I would find it helpful if the Parish Council commented on the representations made by:

- Bloor Homes and Christ Church;
- Harper Crewe HCBB Limited;
- Lone Star Land Graftongate; and
- Oxfordshire County Council.

The District Council proposes a series of revisions to certain policies and the supporting text in the Plan. It would be very helpful if the Parish Council commented on the suggested revisions?

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses to the questions raised by 12 February 2025. 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 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.

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Independent Examiner

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20 January 2025