

Ickleford 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. It is also very comprehensive. The presentation of the Plan is good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is clear. It makes good use of various high-quality maps and photographs.

The Plan is helpfully underpinned by the Design Codes and the Housing Needs Assessment.

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:

Policy E1

The purpose of this policy is self-evident. In addition, I note the commentary in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.7 of the Plan.

Nevertheless, to what extent would the policy bring any added or local value to the application of national Green Belt policy (as set out in Section 13 of the NPPF 2023)?

Policies E3 and E4

The policies have been well-developed and take account of local circumstances. Are they intended to be applied on a proportionate basis to the scale and nature of the proposed development?

Policy HE1

The second part of the policy does not have regard to paragraph 203 of the NPPF. As such I am minded to recommend modifications to remedy this issue. Does the Parish Council have any comments on the way in which it prepared the policy and/or this proposition?

Policy SD2

As submitted the policy has a confusing format.

Does it apply only to:

- sites which would yield between 3 and 10 homes; and
- sites which are not required to deliver affordable housing?

If it includes the latter group, how would the casual reader understand which sites are and are not required to deliver affordable housing?

Would the mathematical approach in the policy realistically work for smaller development (five homes or less)?

In a wider context does the policy not apply to the housing allocations in the Local Plan?

Policy SD3

This is an excellent policy which is underpinned by the Design Codes.

In the round it is a very good local response to Section 12 of the NPPF.

Policy C1

This policy addresses an important matter to the local community in a positive fashion.

There is a degree of tension between the second and third parts of the policy. As such I am minded to recommend modifications to remedy this issue. Does the Parish Council have any comments on the way in which it prepared the policy and/or this proposition?

Policy C3

I understand the way in which the policy has been developed.

Nevertheless, is the policy necessary given the contents of Policy IC3 of the adopted Local Plan? In addition, is it reasonable for the submitted Plan to require justification for the delivery of a new school (criterion a) or the detailed assessments (in criteria b and C) given that the principle of a new school has already been established?

Policy MTT1

The policy has been well-developed and take account of local circumstances. Is it intended to be applied on a proportionate basis to the scale and nature of the proposed development?

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses to the questions raised by 22 November 2023. 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.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

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31 October 2023