

Mattishall Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

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 distinctive vision for the neighbourhood area. Its presentation is very good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is clear.

The Plan is impressively underpinned by a package of detailed documents and assessments. The Design Guide and Code has been very influential in the review of the Plan.

The package of submission documents is proportionate to the neighbourhood area in general, and to the review of the Plan in particular. In combination the various documents helpfully identify the aspects of the Plan which have been updated.

The Parish Council's ambition to review the Plan responds positively to national guidance and associated best practice. The review addresses a balanced range of issues and is underpinned by appropriate evidence base and research. Moreover, it properly takes account of the adoption of the Breckland Local Plan and recent updates to national planning policy.

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 my report and in recommending any modifications that may be necessary to the Plan to ensure that it meets the basic conditions.

General Comment

The information at the end of each policy about the way in which it has changed from the made Plan is very helpful for examination purposes.

Nevertheless, does the Parish Council intend to retain these elements of the Plan if it is made (and at which point the comparison would be academic)?

Policy ENV2

The updates to the policy are appropriately underpinned by the details in Appendix 3

It would be helpful if the Parish Council explained how was the survey work undertaken?

Policy ENV4

The updates to the policy are appropriately underpinned by the details in the Local Green Spaces Assessment

Proposed Local Green Spaces 4 and 5 have attracted considerable comment. It would be helpful if the Parish Council responded to these comments.

Policy ENV7

The policy helpfully incorporates the national agenda on biodiversity.

Policy HOU1

The general updates to the policy are appropriate.

I note that the update to the policy box advises that the inclusion of last bullet point is intended to future proof the plan if the Local Plan Review results in a new site being allocation in Mattishall as part of the Local Plan. However, is it appropriate for the Plan to seek to influence the contents of an emerging Local Plan on the scale and nature of new development in the parish?

Policy HOU3

This is a very good policy which provides a local iteration of national and local policies on design.

Plainly design is universally important. However, I am minded to recommend that the first part of the policy incorporates a proportionate element. This will acknowledge that the Design Guide and Code will have a greater impact on any larger developments. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy HOU5

The second and third parts of the policy read as supporting text rather than as land use planning policies. Please can the Parish Council advise on its thinking?

Policies COM 1, 2 and 5

The updates to these policies will be very effective for the development management process

Policy ECON2

The first of the two new criteria will (directly or indirectly) prevent competition between existing and proposed new businesses. This would not have regard to national policy.

I am minded to recommend that the first criterion is modified so that the scale of the operation relates to the nature of the existing business and the location of the site. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy TRA1

The general updates to the policy are helpful. However, does the third part of the policy bring any added value to national and local planning policies? In short, is it necessary?

Representations

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

It would be helpful if the Parish Council responded to the representations from:

- the local resident/landowner (Representation 7);
- Bellway Homes (Representation 11); and
- Norfolk County Council (Representation 14).

The Breckland Council (Representation 9) suggests a series of revisions to some of the policies and parts of the general text in the Plan. It would be helpful if the Parish Council responded to the various issues raised.

I acknowledge that the representations overlap with the questions which I have raised in relation to Policies ENV4 and HOU1. I am happy for the Parish Council to structure its reply as it sees fit.

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 6 December 2024. 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 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 Breckland 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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8 November 2024