

Harvington Neighbourhood Plan

Summary of Independent Examiner's Report

The Independent Examiner, Ann Shippers, produced her report on the submitted Neighbourhood Plan on 11th June. This paper contains a personal commentary on her report.

The body of her own summary is:

The Plan takes an ambitious approach with policies covering a wide variety of issues of importance to the local community. It supports growth recognising the importance of appropriate development to the continuing vitality of the community. It is underpinned by a comprehensive evidence base. The Plan does not seek to repeat higher tier policies, but to add a local layer to them. It includes a site allocation for some 35 units.

It has been necessary to recommend some modifications. In the main these are intended to ensure the Plan provides a practical framework for decision-making as required by national policy and guidance although I have felt it necessary to recommend the deletion of some policies. I consider that these do not significantly or substantially alter the intention or overall nature of the Plan.

Subject to those modifications, I have concluded that the Plan does meet the basic conditions and all the other requirements I am obliged to examine. I am therefore pleased to recommend to Wychavon District Council that the Harvington Neighbourhood Development Plan can go forward to a referendum.

Deleted policies

The four policies she has recommended should be deleted are:

Local Green Spaces

GS2 Leys Road - the grassed area between houses, nearly opposite the convenience store, which leads to the fields at the rear,

GS8 Field to south of Playing Field (sometimes referred to locally as the "dog-walking field"),

GS10 The Steps. The confusion over garden boundary changes between the time the Draft Plan was submitted and when she personally inspected the area has led her to suggest that listing should be re-considered at a later date once the boundaries have become clear.

Policy LFL3 – Expansion of the Village Hall The Examiner concluded that, since the land-owners objected to the assumption that the land was available, the policy would not be 'deliverable'.

Policy amendments

Regarding the remainder of the draft plan, she has recommended mostly minor changes to the wording of policies and/or their explanatory texts.

Policy improvements

In many cases she has helped improve / strengthen the policies:

- The protection for veteran and mature trees and ancient hedgerows in EH1 B (1),
- The protection for the 350+ trees listed in Appendix C (in EH1 B (2),)
- Protection of the Elm trees in Leys Road EH1 B (4)
- Protection for the linear tree-and-hedge breaks shown in map 8.
- Replacement wildlife corridors to be provided if hedgerows have to be removed.
- Stronger, more specific wording on the protection of valued views (EH5).

BT2 Village Retail and Service Outlets. She has modified the wording to ensure that the policy does not, inadvertently, open the floodgates to 'otherwise unsustainable development' (such as a large supermarket.) Our draft was also (unintentionally) more restrictive than the SWDP, so she has also changed our wording to align with the SWDP.

Weakening of policies

In two cases she has softened / weakened the Draft:

IH3 - Parking Provision We had proposed that new developments should have one parking place per bedroom and (in accordance with a specific WDC recommendation) that attached garages be excluded from the count. She has capped the number of parking places required to be provided to four and has permitted attached garages to be included in this count.

IH5 - Designated Development Site. She has supported the provision of a community space within the development, but has required the map to be re-drawn to include the community space within the overall boundary of the site. In so doing she has down-graded the designation of the community space from an explicit area to one that is 'preferred'.

Neutral policy changes

Her other clarifications and corrections do not appear to have any significant impact on the meaning or application of policies.

Chris Haynes

Chair, Steering Group

2 Jul 2019

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