**Reedham 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 and concise vision for the neighbourhood area.

The presentation of the Plan is good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. The Plan includes various high-quality maps and photographs.

The Plan addresses a series of issues which are very distinctive to the neighbourhood area. It is commendably supported by a series of detailed Assessments which inform the relevant policies in the Plan.

***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 1*

This policy addresses two separate issues. The first is to retain the separation between the two parts of the village (paragraph 41). The second is a supportive approach towards development on Middle Field that will bring overriding benefits for the community (including development uses such as a new village hall, new school and playing field) (paragraph 42).

In my view there is clear tension between these two matters. It would be helpful if the Parish Council explained its thinking on this policy.

Planning is always a balance between harm and benefits and between different objectives. Although the community would like to see Middle Field retained for its openness, some impact on this could be acceptable when balanced against overriding community benefits afforded by the provision of a new village hall or school.

In addition, please can the Parish Council advise about any emerging or costed proposals for a new village hall, new school and playing field.

Is there anything?

*Policies 2 and 3*

It would be helpful if the Parish Council responded to the District Council’s comments on these policies.

The District Council’s concern seems to be around a conflict between the Reedham HNA (which refers to 40% affordable housing being required) and the JCS and emerging GNLP (which refer to 33%). It is suggested by the District Council that an erratum be attached to the HNA to address the conflict and avoid any confusion. This seems a sensible way of dealing with it.

Has the implication of the policies on commercial viability been tested?

No. The Reedham HNA does says that while AECOM has made suggestions for the split of different products within the tenure split, this should be considered indicative as it will be subject to wider considerations of costs, viability and the availability of funding for particular products.

*Policy 4*

This is an excellent policy. It sets out a very good local response to Section 12 of the NPPF.

Is the policy intended to be applied proportionately?

The policy would need to be adhered to as much as possible, maybe with any divergence from it being fully justified by exceptional circumstances.

*Policy 5*

Is the policy necessary now that it has been decided not to proceed with the site (GNLP3003) following the Inspector’s report on the Local Plan?

It has indeed been removed from the GNLP and so strictly there is no need for this policy.

*Policy 6*

It would be helpful if the Parish Council responded to the District Council’s comments on this policy.

Could refer to SUDS and cross-reference Policy 11 on flood risk.

Regarding the minimum size of a garage, this is from Figure 68 (p57) of the Design Codes. The county council’s parking standards referred to by the District Council concern parking spaces rather than garages and so this is different. It is known that garages are used for all sorts of things such as storage and bikes and this needs to be taken into account or the garage simply will not be used for parking the car, or could even deter cycle ownership and use.

*Policy 7*

I am minded to recommend modify to the policy based on the factual comments made by the District Council. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Agreed that changes should be made to reflect changes to the NPPF etc. It is noted that regulations for BNG have been further delayed beyond January 2024.

*Policy 9*

In the round this is an excellent policy. It is properly underpinned by Views Assessment.

*Policy 12*

This is a distinctive policy which applies existing Local Plan policies to community facilities in the parish.

*Policy 13*

The first part of the second section of the policy reads as a statement of fact rather than as a land use policy. Please can the Parish Council explain its thinking on the matter? Does it relate to the contents of paragraph 121 of the Plan?

It does partly relate to para 121, but is not restricted to that as it is wider support for other development proposals that would provide for better social interaction. The reference to ‘significant weight’ is meant to indicate how important it is and that due weight should therefore be given to such proposals. The NPPF also uses terms such as ‘substantial weight’ to emphasise the high level of support for particular policy areas.

*Policy 14*

In the first part of the policy what is meant by ‘certain types of commercial use’?

It would be helpful if the Parish Council responded to the District Council’s comments on this policy.

Any views on what is meant by ‘certain types’? Does this mean non-industrial, so not storage/ distribution and not general industrial? So, it could include sports, professional uses such as financial, nursery/ creche, medical, small-scale retail etc?

Redundant rural building refers to that covered by Class Q – conversion of agricultural buildings, where extensions/ enlargement is not allowed under this PD right. The policy aims to support extensions or enlargement where the proposal is for commercial or community use, so not residential.

In answer to the District Council, it covers some commercial and community uses.

*Policy 15*

Whilst the policy has two distinct headings, they both make reference to the School. Should the first part simply apply more generally throughout the parish?

Yes it should, and perhaps the title should be, “New Parking Provision, including for Reedham Primary and Nursery School.”

*Policy 16*

There appears to be a conflict between the title of the policy (non-designated heritage assets) and the policy itself (all heritage assets including the identified on-designated heritage assets).

I note that the supporting text makes no reference to designated heritage assets. In addition, I have concluded that the policy brings no added value to designated heritage assets beyond the content of national and local planning policies.

Am I correct to conclude that the policy should apply solely to non-designated heritage assets?

Yes

***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 following representations:

* the Broads Authority; RNP-07, RNP-09, - agree with suggested changes.
* RNP-10, local area really just means that enhancements should be delivered as close as possible if not within the parish. RNP-12 refers to Policy 14 and the lack of clarity as to what ‘certain types of commercial uses’ means and this probably does need clarifying.
* Savills; Essentially Savills (RNP-16) set out that Middle Field is ideal for housing and that Policy 1 is restricting this potential by using a type of designation that does not appear as a ‘type’ in either the NPPF or local plan. The group should highlight that ‘important views’ are also common designations in NPs and this also does not appear in the local plan or NPPF. That said, the group could agree with the proposed changes put forward by BDC, which I think largely avoids the ‘designation’ issue but still protects the openness.
* Norfolk Constabulary; The full representation (summarised in RNP-17) is that they would like to see policing and crime reflected more in the NP, such as Secure by Design. The Group feels that this is not an issue particular to Reedham and that matters such as Secure by Design are already effectively covered in the emerging GNLP, such as Policy 2 (Sustainable Communities).
* Norfolk Wildlife Trust; RNP-18 – does the group think the following should be added to policy 7, “Development should incorporate green roofs and green walls as appropriate, including on any new community buildings”. Also suggested adding the following, “Buffer zones should be implemented around designated and sensitive wildlife sites, including County Wildlife Sites, as appropriate, to minimise development impacts on these sites”, however I think we are at too late a stage to make such a change. Also suggested adding a map of green corridors, but again I think it is too late for this. Agree to minor suggested amendment
* Norfolk County Council; Re the suggested re-wording of BNG legislation (RNP-26), the group suggests that this should be suitably imprecise given yet further delays. No comment regarding the LLFA and its representations. Regarding the Minerals Authority, a reference could be made in relation to Middle Field (Policy 1) to set out the minerals deposit and safeguarding (RNP-30).
* and
* the two comments from property owners about the proposed Quay Terrace Local Green Space (LGS3). Objected – what does the group think? For information, the Broads Authority are looking at allocating the open space on Reedham Quay as amenity green space.

Broadland District Council proposes a series of revisions to certain policies in the Plan. It would be helpful if the Parish Council commented on the suggested revisions (beyond the matters already raised in this note on a policy-by-policy basis).

***Protocol for responses***

I would be grateful for responses to the questions raised by 29 January 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 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

Reedham Neighbourhood Development Plan

4 January 2024