

LOWER BEEDING PARISH COUNCIL

26th May 2021

Mr A Ashcroft

C/o Horsham District Council

By email: norman.kwan@horsham.gov.uk

Dear Mr Ashcroft

Lower Beeding Parish Council Response to Examiner's Clarification Note

I write in response to your Clarification Note (CN), which was received via Horsham District Council (HDC) on 25th April 2021.

I set out below Lower Beeding Parish Council's (LBPC's) response to each point of clarification raised. For ease of reference, I first set out the matter raised, followed by the response of LBPC. This follows the order of the CN.

The Plan's Approach to Site Allocations and Paragraphs 5.26/5.27

Examiner Point of Clarification: *The Plan has taken a thorough approach to the assessment of the sites considered on a case-by-case basis. In this context has the Plan assessed the cumulative impact of the proposed development of the three housing allocations in Lower Beeding on the wider setting of the village in the countryside to the immediate north?*

LBPC Response: The Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan, Submission Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) (SA) seeks to test the contribution the LBNP will make towards achieving sustainable development, through the identification of a number of objectives and indicators.

The Sustainability Framework has assessed the sustainability impacts of the policies within the Plan. The objectives comprise the three strands of sustainability, i.e. social, economic and environmental. The indicators quantify and measure the achievement of each objective.

Appendix 1 of the SA details the housing site appraisal. This set out the assessment of all potential housing sites were each tested against the Sustainability Framework. The Assessment shows the majority of potential housing sites would have some negative impact on Environmental Objectives. Environmental objectives include 'Objective 1 - Countryside: To conserve and enhance the rural character of the parish'. Indicators include 'Number of new residential dwellings approved within the parish beyond the defined settlement boundaries and areas allocated for development.'

The extent of this impact varies dependent on the location of the site. In order to seek to facilitate the delivery of housing need in the parish, it is considered inevitable there will be some harm, particularly against Environmental Objectives.

Mitigation measures to minimise this have been duly considered and are set out in individual Housing Sites Assessments. For those sites proposed for allocation in Lower Beeding, the Appraisals confirms:

- Trinity Cottage: Development would have a negative impact on Objective 1. The Appraisal confirms mitigation measures in conjunction with development could include the retention of mature trees and hedges.
- Land north of Sandygate Lane: Development would have a negative impact on Objective 1. The Appraisal confirms mitigation measures in conjunction with development could include the retention of mature trees and hedges. In addition, to mitigate the removal of existing hedgerow to facilitate visibility splays additional planting and landscaping could be provided.
- Land at Glayde Farm: Development would have a negative impact on Objective 1. The Appraisal confirms mitigation measures, in conjunction with development, could include the retention of mature trees and hedges. In addition, to mitigate the removal of existing hedgerow to facilitate visibility splays additional planting and landscaping could be provided.

The policies for each of the proposed allocations seek the inclusion of a number of mitigation measures to minimise the negative effects of development as far as possible:

- Policy 7: Land at Trinity Cottage includes criterion to retain existing mature trees and hedges and for proposals to provide a landscape buffer on the northern and southern boundary.
- Policy 8: Land north of Sandygate Lane includes criterion to retain existing mature trees and hedges and for proposals to provide a landscape buffer on the northern, southern and western boundary.
- Policy 9: Land at Glayde Farm (Field B) includes criterion to retain existing mature hedgerows unless there is a demonstrated need to remove a section. Where this is the case, replacement screening will be required if deemed necessary.

It is submitted the negative effects which have been identified are limited to the immediate environment and have been mitigated as far as possible. The cumulative impacts of the sites proposed for allocation have been considered, as per para 5.9 of the SA, and it has been concluded the cumulative in combination effects will not be significant.

The proposed allocation presents the most sustainable option for the Parish as the sites with the least environmental effects have been allocated. The policies seek the inclusion of a number of mitigation measures to minimise the negative effects of development as far as possible.

It is not considered the LBNP will have significant detrimental effects, including secondary or indirect effects, cumulative effects, or synergistic effects. Overall, it is considered the LBNP will have positive effects on environmental, social and economic indicators, and will promote sustainable development over the Plan period.

Policy 5

Examiner Point of Clarification: *Is there any reason why this policy departs from the general approach taken in the first four policies and specifically mentions the Parish Council?*

LBPC Response: LBPC wish Policy 5 to follow the general approach of Policies 1-4.

Should the Examiner agree and be minded to recommend a modification, LBPC would be happy to accept. For the ease of the Examiner, LBPC suggest Policy 5 could be updated to read as follows:

“Development proposals which incorporate measures to maximise energy efficiency of new buildings will be supported.”

Policies 7 and 9

Examiner Point of Clarification: *In both cases the policies are potentially unclear on how access will be provided, although I can see from Figure 20 that ‘preferred access points’ have been indicated.*

Do the ‘preferred access’ points overlap with the details of the ‘vehicular access constraints’ sections of the sites concerned as included in the Site Assessment work (in Appendix 5 of the Consultation Statement)?

Are the access arrangements supported by the owners/proposed developers of the sites concerned and are the sites capable of delivery in the Plan period?

LBPC Response: The Site Assessment work was carried out in the early stages of the Plan making process and sought to highlight any obvious access constraints. The Site Assessment for all sites seeks to confirm whether it is considered access could be achieved. For Land at Trinity Cottage (LBP17) and Land at Glayde Farm, the Site Assessment advises access could be achieved via logical access routes off the existing highway.

By way of background and for the benefit of the Examiner, the ‘preferred access points’ were identified on the advice of HDC as part of the ‘health check’ of the draft Regulation 14 Pre-submission Plan. Please see Appendix 16 of the Consultation Statement for full details of ‘health check’.

The Regulation 14 Pre-submission Plan was prepared on this basis and ‘preferred access point’ was identified on the Maps enclosed in Section 10. The ‘preferred access point’ was not however detailed within the proposed allocation policies. The wording proposed for each policy will enable a level of flexibility to ensure suitable and safe access can be achieved.

Consultation on the Pre-submission LBNP was undertaken between 2 November 2019 - 17 January 2020. In response to the consultation, representations were received from, amongst others, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and landowners/agents of those sites proposed for allocation.

WSCC provided specific comments on a number of policies and aims. With respect to the level of proposed development, WSCC advised:

“The overall level of development proposed in the Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan is in accordance with the forecast estimate of background traffic growth assumed in the Strategic Transport Assessment. The Strategic Transport Assessment indicates that there will be no severe impacts on the transport network that cannot be mitigated to a satisfactory level. The County Council considers that this provides sufficient evidence to justify the overall level of development proposed in the Lower Beeding Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, it is not necessary to produce further transport evidence before allocating the sites proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan for Lower Beeding.”

With respect to sites proposed for allocation WSCC stated:

“Given that the pre-submission Neighbourhood Plan for Lower Beeding includes the proposed allocation of small scale housing sites, it should be noted that site specific matters in the Neighbourhood Plan will need to be tested and refined through the Development Management process.”

Comments relating to access arrangements were provided for Policy 6: Land at Cyder Farm. WSCC noted the Parish Council’s desire to maintain the existing access and stated the applicant will need to demonstrate that use of the existing access is safe and suitable in line with national guidance. In light of such, WSCC recommended that the criterion relating to access was reworded.

WSCC also provided comments on Policy 8: Land north of Sandygate Lane. Comments related to the proposed wording of Criterion 10 relating to pedestrian access. No further comments were made in relation to the other sites proposed for allocation.

As set out in Table 2 of the Consultation Statement, the Submission Plan was updated to incorporate WSCC's recommendations.

With respect to comments from landowners/agents of the site proposed for allocation, a summary of comments received is set out below for ease:

- Policy 7: Land at Trinity Cottage. No representations were received.
- Policy 9: Land at Glayde Farm (Field B): Representations supported the allocation. With respect to access, it confirmed access can be obtained from Handcross Road or potentially Church Lane. Representations noted *"that to provide sufficient and safe access to the site from Handcross Road (B2110), an area of land from to the east will be required. There is also the potential for an access location to the Land at Glayde Farm from Church Lane if the Parish were minded to consider this alternative."* To incorporate further flexibility into section 7 of the policy to allow for suitable and safe access to the site, representations proposed that section 7 of Policy 9 should be reworded.

As set out in Table 2 of the Consultation Statement, the Submission Plan was updated to incorporate the above recommendation.

Consultation on the Submission Plan was undertaken between 17 December 2020 - 11 February 2021. In response to the consultation, WSCC did not provide any further comments on the proposed access arrangements in relation to Policy 7 and Policy 9.

Comments received from landowners/agents were received in relation to Policy 9. Representations reiterated that access can be obtained from Handcross Road or potentially Church Lane. In addition, representations advised *"the land to the east will be required to provide sufficient and safe access from the B2110."*

In providing this response, LBPC have contacted the landowners/agent of Policy 7 and Policy 9 to confirm support for access arrangements and to confirm that the sites are capable of delivery in the Plan period. The responses received are available in Appendix 1.

Policy 12

Examiner Point of Clarification: *The intention of the policy is clear. Nevertheless, it fails to provide any details about local vernacular details or the way in which they vary throughout the neighbourhood area.*

Did the Parish Council consider this matter as the Plan was being prepared?

LBPC Response: LBPC wish to provide details of what is valued locally in design terms and identify those local details which are considered to add to the character of the area.

Should the Examiner be amenable to expanding the supporting text, LBPC would welcome the following below being incorporated into paragraph 5.59:

"The existing style and architecture across the Parish is valued locally. Throughout the Parish, the walls of many houses and buildings are partly tile-hung or rendered, and roofs (more often gabled than hipped) frequently feature red clay tiles. In the past, bricks have been heavily used as a building material and there are many examples of them being used creatively to create patterns in local colours, such as warm reds and light browns. Horsham Stone features prominently throughout the Parish as well.

Wood has also been used either structurally or as feather edge board to cover the upper storeys of houses, or as barge boards to embellish the roof lines. Using this preferred mix of natural materials creates a recognisable common sense of design that contributes to the distinct rural style of the parish.

LBPC wish to support the use of traditional and local building materials in future developments. Materials which are sympathetic to nearby structures and in keeping with traditional and local style will be supported."

Policy 18

Examiner Point of Clarification: *The first element of the policy is more restrictive than national policy.*

Does the Parish Council have a specific reason for taking this approach?

LBPC Response: The Parish benefits from a number of employment sites which exist along the B2110, the A281, and on Church Lane. LBPC consider fully utilising existing sites would protect greenfield land throughout the Parish. In drafting Policy 18, LBPC were mindful Lower Beeding residents wish to preserve the countryside and the rural nature of the Parish and with this in mind would wish to retain Point 1: "Development proposed is on previously developed land" as part of Policy 18. However, should the Examiner be minded to recommend bullet point 1 is removed, LBPC respectfully request the remainder of Policy 18 is carried forward to the Referendum Plan.

Representations

Examiner Point of Clarification: *Does the Parish Council wish to comment on any of the representations made to the Plan?*

In particular does it wish to comment on the representations from:

- *the various local residents who make comments about the site selection process;*
- *Horsham District Council;*
- *Boakes Land Projects; and*
- *Millwood Designer Homes.*

LBPC Response:

Various local residents who make comments about the site selection process: LBPC consider the Background Paper: Site Selection (Appendix 19 of the Consultation Statement) provides a response to this process and have no further comments to make.

Horsham District Council: LBPC have no comments to make on representations received. With respect to HDC's comments regarding access arrangements in relation to Policy 9, please see response above.

Boakes Land Projects: Comments relate to land to the south of Handcross Road, Lower Beeding (designated reference LBP 20). LBPC's position on sites promoted for development and the site selection process is set out in the Lower Beeding Parish Housing Land Availability Assessment (Appendix 5 of the Consultation Statement) and the Background Paper: Site Selection (Appendix 19 of the Consultation Statement) which form part of the evidence base of the LBNP.

Millwood Designer Homes: Representations relate to the Land at Glayde Farm, West of Church. Representations include a number of recommendations and observations.

Recommendations Comprise:

1. Recommend that LBNPG revisit the LBNP to provide information on how the LBNP has placed sustainable development at the heart of the plan.
2. Recommend the LBNP and the BCS set out clearly how the emerging evidence base has been used to inform the LBNP. Without this, there is a risk that the LBNP may not meet the basic conditions and/or will become quickly superseded by the eHLP.
3. Recommend that the LBNP or BCS explains how the housing required uses the evidence base of the eHLP to inform the housing requirement
4. Recommend that the LBNP allocates the entire housing need (51 units) and allows windfalls sites to come forward where they meet the requirements of the NPPF, the LBNP and the adopted Horsham Local Plan. That adaptive wording is included to read 'at least 51 units' to allow for changes in the eHLP prior to its adoption.
5. Recommend that LBNP includes wording to link its policies with the Horsham SHMA and any updates, providing for future flexibility through adaptive policy wording.

Observations Comprise:

1. That the land to the east of the allocated site will be required to provide access from the B2110. This land could also be used for further housing development and would provide a better character for the access road.
2. The land to east of Draft Policy 9 is available for bungalows if LBNPG require additional land for this housing type.

In response to recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1:** The LBNP is considered to fully comply with the aims of, and contribute to the achievement of, sustainable development, as set out in the various sections of the NPPF. It contributes to the achievement of sustainable development through its Strategic Objectives, Policies and Aims. The LBNP comprises a balance of economic, social and environmental goals.
- The accompanying Basic Conditions Statement sets out in detail how it is considered the LBNP will contribute towards sustainable development. Section 4 sets out how proposed policies and aims are in compliance with national guidance.
- In addition, and as set out above, the LBNP is supported by an SA. This confirms all policies contained within the Submission Version LBNP have been tested within the SA to ensure that the most sustainable

policy options have been selected and in turn, enable the delivery of sustainable development over the Plan period.

- **Recommendation 2:** The LBNP is required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Development Plan for the area (or any part of that area). The relevant Development Plan for the area is the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF). The accompanying Basic Condition demonstrates how this has been achieved. In addition, and given the stage of the emerging Local Plan, an assessment of the conformity of each LBNP Policy/Aim has been undertaken in respect of emerging policies.
- In any event, LBPC have made a commitment to review the LBNP in due course to ensure the Plan aligns with adopted policy. This position is acknowledged and supported in HDC's response to the Regulation 16 consultation.
- **Recommendation 3 & 4:** In line with the NPPF an indicative number has been requested from HDC. LBPC's position on the quantum of housing to be delivered in the Plan period is set out in para 5.7-5.16 of the LBNP.
- **Recommendation 5:** The proposed policy wording of Policy 11 will ensure housing mix is informed by the most recent evidence. Such an approach allows for flexibility and future evidence base studies to inform the housing mix to be provided.

In response to observations:

- **Observation 1:** See comments above in respect of access arrangements.
- **Observation 2:** In response to comments relating to the development potential of land to the east, as set out above, LBPC's position on the quantum of housing to be provided is set out in para 5.7-5.16 of the LBNP. The Site Selection Background paper sets out LBPC's position on land to the east.
- In any event, the LBNP includes a commitment to undertake a review of the LBNP in 2021, in order to take account of any revised housing numbers which are allocated to the Parish in the Local Plan Review. Should the Parish require additional housing at this time, land to the east could be considered further at this stage.

I trust this is all in order and will assist in the preparation of the Examiner's Report. Should there be any further queries and/or information required, please do not hesitate to let the Parish Council know.

Yours Sincerely,

Peter Knox
Clerk to the Lower Beeding Parish Council