



# BLEDLOW-CUM-SAUNDERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

*Planning our future*

Aude Pantel  
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Examination Ref: 01/BY/BcSNP

Via email:  
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13<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Dear Ms Pantel,

## Request for further information: Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan Examination

Please find below the answers to the questions asked by Mr. Yuille's in his letter to Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

### Question 1

The methodology used to define the settlement boundaries across the parish was finalised by the Housing Development Task Group and included in its Report (pages 7-9) which was then published on the Parish Council website. A specific exhibit of the methodology was included in the material presented at the Public Meetings on 27<sup>th</sup> February and 5<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and during the subsequent Neighbourhood Plan Clinics.

The Neighbourhood Plan Team has made every effort to apply the methodology consistently while taking into account the feedback from residents obtained during the various consultation stages. The Neighbourhood Plan Team felt that, in the case of Pitch Green House (and a number of other locations both within Pitch Green and elsewhere within the parish), following the property boundaries could lead (i) to an outward extension of the built environment into the open countryside and (ii) to inappropriate backland development, in this case behind the cottage and house adjacent to Pitch Green House. For these reasons, the settlement boundary cuts across gardens in a few places.

As far as the boundary which is shown on the Ordnance Survey map is concerned, subsequent enquiries have confirmed that the hedge shown on the map was removed in the 1990s. However, the Task Group was unable to find evidence to suggest that planning permission was granted for a change of use. In the circumstances, the Task Group decided (i) that the boundary would be treated as a dynamic boundary in the Report, and (ii) whether it is a dynamic boundary or not, the settlement boundary should follow the old boundary line for the reasons given above.

### Question 2

In terms of public open space, those spaces which are registered as a Village Green (protected by virtue of Section 12 of the Inclosure Act 1857 and Section 29 of the Commons Act 1876) are referred to in paragraph 2.9 (and figure 7) of the Community Infrastructure Task Group Report. Other public spaces in Bledlow and Pitch Green are marked on the maps which form part of Appendix B to the Plan. For Bledlow Ridge they are shown on the map within Appendix C to the Plan. To our knowledge, there are no sites of environmental or ecological value within the proposed settlement boundaries. However any such sites which do exist, or which come into existence during the Plan period, will need to be protected which is why the wording has been included in the policy.

Neighbourhood Plan website: <http://tinyurl.com/BcSNeighbourhoodPlan>  
Neighbourhood Plan email: [np@bledlow-cum-saundertonparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:np@bledlow-cum-saundertonparishcouncil.org.uk)

### Question 3

Although Policy 3.1 defines Existing Development as “(a) *the buildings currently standing at the site comprising a canteen/ballroom and office building and (b) the slab on which they are standing*”, it is not identified in Plan F of the Plan.

We would refer the examiner to the posters presented to residents during the public meetings in February/March 2016 (posted on the “[Your Involvement](#)” page – Paragraph “Public Meetings” of the Parish website) which include the following aerial photograph:



This photograph shows where the current and former buildings stood. The extent of the Existing Development will also be apparent during Mr Yuille’s site visit.

### Question 4

The evidence supporting the need for a retirement village is provided in detail in Section 7 of the South Saunderton Task Group (SSTG) Report.

The evidence demonstrating the need for an employment use of the site is provided in Section 6 of the SSTG Report, with further evidence from Paragraph 9.47 of the Bucks HEEDNA.

Viability is more difficult to assess using publicly available information as it is largely site specific and dependent on what sort of scheme a developer proposes and how it is funded. However, in large part viability follows need. For these reasons, Policy 3 provides a proportionate framework for

development schemes larger than the Existing Development that (i) address existing residential and non-residential needs, (ii) have the support of local residents and (iii) are sympathetic to the sensitive location.

We would also point out that our understanding of the relative weight of the needs behind the proposed land uses for our area has informed the Indicative Land Use Diagram in Plan F of the Plan. Overall we believe there is a wealth of evidence (both cited in the Plan and apparent from developments in other locations) to suggest that mixed schemes of this type are viable.

Finally, we note that St Congar has chosen to describe these detailed and carefully thought out proposals as being simply a “wish list”. At the same time we would like to point out that no evidence has been produced during the various consultation stages to suggest that the proposed mixed use scheme is not viable beyond St Congar’s rather dismissive comment in the closing statement of their planning appeal.

### Question 5

Paragraph 5.49 of the Plan makes reference to the planning judgement used by the Neighbourhood Plan Team in determining the maximum quantum of development (beyond the Existing Development) that would be acceptable to the community at referendum.

This judgement is based on the following considerations:

- Any development larger than the Existing Development would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and could be justified only in the presence of “very special circumstances”, i.e. if other considerations clearly outweigh the potential harm of the development to the Green Belt.
- In our opinion whether these very special circumstances exist depends on: (i) the nature and quality of design of the proposed development and (ii) the quantum of the proposed development.
- As far as the nature and quality of the design is concerned, the Plan promotes (i) a mixed development that addresses the needs identified by the evidence outlined in the South Saunderton Task Group Report and provides for the long term regeneration of the site, (ii) a design which is appropriate within its landscape setting in the Chilterns AONB and (iii) a development that is linked to, if not part of, the existing South Saunderton settlement.
- Paragraph 5.49 of the Plan makes it clear that our reasoning on the quantum of the possible development beyond the Existing Development (under policy 3.2) starts with St Congar’s development proposal. The rationale for using this as a starting point is (i) it is an actual and detailed proposal and (ii) it has been widely consulted upon. It therefore has evidential value.
- There is ample and documented evidence (see paragraph 5.48 of the Plan) that local residents, the Chiltern Conservation Board, the Parish Council and Wycombe District Council all regard St Congar’s proposal as an overdevelopment of the site. On the other hand, we believe that St Congar has not submitted any evidence specific to the Molins site to justify and support the proposed quantum beyond the Existing Development (apart from referring to a general need for Wycombe District Council to build houses for the future needs of the district).
- If the quantum of development proposed by St Congar represents an overdevelopment of the site, what is the maximum acceptable extent of its development (beyond the Existing Development)? In answering this question we have decided to take a practical approach given that there is no single correct number when it comes to the quantum of development in this particular location. At the Neighbourhood Plan public meetings we, therefore, proposed to local residents a conceptual layout of what a large development on the former Molins site would look like (based on the substantive evidence generated by the Parish Survey). We then took the very consistent residents’ feedback (see the published Pre-drafting consultation Feedback Report pages 7 and 8) to draw up the Indicative Land Use Diagram included in the Plan (page 36).

- Since this is a diagrammatic representation of what a large development of the Molins site could look like, we do not have all the elements to precisely determine the maximum gross external floor area. We have, however, calculated that this should equate to approximately 15,000 square metres once the quality of the design required to minimise the impact on the openness of the Green Belt is taken into account. This equates to approximately 60% of the St Congar proposal and, as such, is a planning judgement in much the same way as the St Congar proposals are. However, unlike with St Congar, our proposal is supported by the majority of local stakeholders.

We would also like to add that we have chosen to only generate an Indicative Land Use Diagram for a potential development larger than the Existing Development in part because we wished to retain some flexibility for the developer.

We hope that the above addresses Mr Yuille's questions; obviously we are available to provide any further information which may be needed.

As requested by Mr Yuille, a copy of Mr Yuille's letter and of this response have been posted on the "[The Evidence](#)" page of the Parish Council website.

Yours faithfully,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Simon Breese.

Simon Breese  
Chairman Neighbourhood Plan Working Group