

# **BLEDLLOW-CUM-SAUNDERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

## **REGULATION 14 REPORT: JULY 2016**

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report by rCOH is to summarise the outcome of the consultation period on the Pre Submission Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Neighbourhood Plan (BcS NP) held for the statutory 6-week period between June and July 2016. The report makes recommendations on how the BcSNP should proceed in the light of representations made.
2. The report will be published by the Project Working Group on behalf of Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council acting as the lead authority, and qualifying body for the BcS NP.
3. The responses have been reviewed and analysed by the Working Group and its summary of those responses and the changes to the plan that result will be reported in the Consultation Statement. The statement will accompany the submitted BcS NP in due course, in line with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
4. During the consultation period there were representations made by local people, by the statutory consultees, developers/landowners and by other local and interested organisations.
5. This report summarises those representations on the Pre-Submission Plan by the statutory consultees, developers/landowners and other interested organisations and the extent to which the proposed land use policies meet the basic conditions as required by the Regulations.

### **Consultation Analysis**

6. The local planning authority, Wycombe District Council (Consultee 506), has provided officer comments. The Steering Group has been in regular dialogue with its officers during key stages of the preparation of the BcS NP. In summary these issues relate to:
  - a) Habitats Regulations Assessment – the need to clarify this requirement
  - b) Policy 1 & 2 comments – WDC confirm the group “should be satisfied that the scale of development implied by the policy is sustainable” and whether to split settlement policy dependent on whether a settlement is within or without the Green Belt
  - c) Policy 3 – WDC continues to raise issues about the ‘Molins’ policy in that it can only support ‘Option 1’
  - d) Policy 8 – Amend the policy to reflect whether it applies within or without the Green Belt and whether it aligns with emerging policies

- e) Policy 10 – Recommend deletion as this policy is adequately covered by existing Development Plan Policies
- f) Policy 11 – Review the policy for consistency with Green Belt policy
- g) Policy 12 – Given there are no current plans to expand the school at present review the need to secure developer contributions from within the policy as the Local Education Authority (BCC) will make this assessment on a case by case basis.
- h) Policy 13 – Review the requirement to secure ‘developer contributions’ in the policy given such infrastructure can be secured through CIL.
- 1) Appendix A of the representation contains a number of suggestions for minor amendments to the text of the plan and also comments on the Draft Sustainability Appraisal Report which have been responded to in the Final SA Report.

7. The Chilterns AONB (Consultee 504) provide officer comments under delegated powers suggesting a number of minor amendments to the plan text, comment on the significance of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and propose the inclusion of a model AONB policy. In respect of individual policies:

- a) Policy 1 – suggest a number of modifications to the policy wording to improve the scope of the policy and where the policy may apply
- b) Policy 2 – amendments to wording
- c) Policy 3 – they support the mixed-use policy approach and suggest amendments to reinforce the influence of the landscape on the scale and density of development
- d) Policy 4 – they welcome reference to the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide but question why this only applies in the four settlements proposed by Policy 1.
- e) Policy 8 – do not accept that the policy should include proposals for new dwellings in the countryside in exceptional circumstances, which they consider to be more permissive than para 55 of the NPPF.
- f) Policy 9 – encourages employment uses but excludes any expectations about design.
- g) Policy 10 – they do not consider that the policy matches national policy in respect to AONBs and suggest insertion of a model AONB policy into the plan.
- h) Policy Inset Maps – the way in which the maps are presented appears to be giving statutory basis to the features contained in the maps.

8. Natural England (Consultee 507) - Welcome the inclusion of Policy 10 and those elements of Policy 3 which fall under their remit. No amendments proposed

9. Environment Agency (Consultee 508) - Welcome the plans intention to avoid allocating sites in areas of flood risk/watercourses. In respect of Policy 3 they also indicate their support for clauses within the policy that reflect their remit e.g. contaminated land and the requirement for a contamination statement. No amendments proposed

10. Thames Water (Consultee 505) - Welcome the opportunity to respond and request inclusion of a policy on sewerage and wastewater infrastructure capacity.

11. Chiltern Clinical Commissioning Group (Consultee 500) - The CCG confirms they are working with WDC to ensure healthcare requirements are considered in Wycombe and Princes Risborough. They welcome the plans intent of supporting limited development given the local pressures on GP services.

12. St Pauls Church Parochial Church Council (Consultee 502) - Congratulate the group on a well presented plan and comment on whether it appropriate that St Paul's Church is included in Policy 11 Community Facilities, and suggest if it is appropriate, then should the other Anglican Churches in the Parish also be included.

13. Chiltern Railways (Consultee 503) - Support the indicative access to South Saunderton station as proposed in Policy 3 and illustrated in the concept plan. Whereas,

14. Network Rail (Consultee 509) - Whilst not commenting on any specific policies, Network Rail now confirm they are a statutory consultee for all proposals within 10m of the railway boundary.

15. Bledlow Charities (Consultee 501) – Welcome the opportunity to comment on the Plan but do not consider it will have any direct effect on their operations within the Parish.

16. Buckinghamshire CC (Consultee 510) – Welcome the inclusion of transport related policies and supports the inclusion of Policy 12 related to Bledlow Ridge School and confirm they will work with the school if school expansion is deemed necessary. They also welcome the inclusion of a retirement village land-use within Policy 3, and suggest a number of modifications as they relate to transport and highway matters in Policy 3 and 6, and the Implementation section.

17. Bradenham Parish Council (Consultee 511) – Confirm they are not able to comment on the Plan due to Parish Council meeting cycles, but nonetheless wish the Plan well.

18. PPML Consulting Ltd on behalf ERLP 1 Sarl c/o St Congar (Consultee 100) – Welcome the opportunity to engage with plan preparation. They challenge the plans adherence to the 'Basic Conditions' and restrict their comments to Policy 3 Molins, in which they have a land interest. They suggest Policy 3 is out of date, insufficiently flexible and justified and places restrictions on the development which would otherwise be unacceptable in national and local planning terms and in meeting the strategic development needs for housing and economic development in the District.

### **Modifying the Submission Plan**

19. Details of the full representations made to the Pre-Submission Consultation and the resulting changes made to the Submission Plan are tabulated in the Consultation Statement (Appendix I).

20. The principle of Policy 1 combined with Policy 2 is generally supported both by Wycombe District Council and the Chilterns AONB. WDC confirm the review of settlement boundaries are a matter that the Neighbourhood Plan can respond, as long as the scale of development proposed by the policies is sustainable. On both counts and the terms by which development would be considered acceptable - as set out in Policy 2 in particular - are considered to respond to these comments and no fundamental change to either policy is recommended or considered necessary.

21. As would be anticipated, Policy 3 received considerable attention from Wycombe DC and St Congar (the landowner). The former, while not challenging the 'general conformity' of the policy, suggest that they are only able to support Option 1 and that it is for the group to find an appropriate way forward in terms of the policy in general. On the other hand, PPML Consulting Ltd on behalf of ERLP 1 Sarl c/o St Congar, in commenting only on this single policy, challenge its conformity with the 'basic conditions'. Their comments appear to be rehearsing arguments that will be used at the forthcoming planning appeal for this site (programmed for September), but while it is not for the neighbourhood plan to make a judgement on the outcome of that appeal, much of their representation is not considered relevant to the neighbourhood plan. Considerable steps have been taken to ensure the policy as drafted, plans positively and is sufficiently flexible in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Policy has been informed by the WDC evidence base in terms of its land-use mix. The community and others, including the Chilterns AONB and Buckinghamshire CC, have expressed a strong preference for a mixed use scheme. No detailed evidence has been presented to suggest a mixed use scheme is unviable and the policy has been drafted to provide flexibility in terms of how this mix is delivered. In relation to neighbourhood planmaking in particular, the community have informed its acceptability, which is necessary to achieve a positive result at a referendum. Taking all matters together, no major changes to the policy are recommended. It is for the Examiner to determine whether the Plan meets the 'Basic Conditions'.

22. Minor modifications are recommended however to take account of a number of comments and in line with the broad support received for the policy. But these modifications will not change the fundamental principle underlying the policy; that is that the most sustainable and acceptable use for the site is the land-use mix as defined by the Policy, and that this maintains the position agreed following the abandonment of the Saunderton Area Action Plan in favour of a community led Neighbourhood Plan.

23. Policies 4 to 7 are intended to influence the design quality of development in the Parish and were supported by the majority of respondents. Following a number of meetings with the planning authority, prior to the publication of the Pre-Submission Plan, the policies were modified, and Policy 7 reworked, and as result only minor textual amendments are now recommended. The Chilterns AONB have suggested a more comprehensive design managements approach across the whole of the parish (beyond the proposed settlement boundaries) including the inclusion of a 'model policy', but the management of development design is considered to be comprehensively addressed without the need for any additional policy influence. In any case development outside those areas proposed by the policies are considered to be sufficiently covered by alternative design guidance.

24. Support for the rural economy and rural diversification is a key local issue and Policy 8 is intended to reinforce this by enabling sustainable rural development that serve essential rural needs. The Chilterns AONB commented that they felt the policy was too permissive of development. The CAONB Management Plan 2014 - 2019 appears however to be similarly supportive of the policy intent, and the policy is considered to appropriately reflect the underlying purpose of policies D5, D6, and D7 within the AONB Management Plan. Minor modifications are however recommended to the supporting text to provide additional clarity to the 'exceptional circumstances' that apply.

25. Policy 9 similarly has broad support, and reflects the considerable loss of employment uses within the Parish over a number of years. Only minor modifications are recommended as suggested by the CAONB to broaden the policy scope.

26. There was a divergence of opinion as to the merit of retaining Policy 10 within the Plan. Whereas the policy was welcomed by Natural England, it was considered to offer insufficient protection by the CAONB in that it fails to apply an appropriate hierarchy to a range of environmental assets. The policy should be amended to reflect the CAONB's concerns, but it is not considered necessary (even if it was practical post the Reg. 14 stage) to add their suggested 'model policy' as its intent is considered to be adequately covered by the Plan as a whole.

27. In relation to the remaining policies (11–14), they received general support and only minor modifications are recommended. Buckinghamshire County Council usefully set out the current position with regard to Bledlow Ridge School, and WDC suggested amendments to the policy in relation to developer contributions and the policy is recommended for amendment accordingly. Similar amendments in relation to developer contributions are recommended to Policy 13.

## **Recommendations**

28. It is recommended that:

- The policies and supporting text are amended subject to the comments made in respect of policies outlined above, and as set out in detail in Appendix I of the Consultation Statement.
- The BcS NP is finalised for submission for examination, subject to the completion of a Basic Conditions Statement, the production of the Final SA/SEA Report and the Consultation Statement