

Somerford Keynes 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 very distinctive vision for the neighbourhood area.

The presentation of the Plan is very good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is very clear.

The various appendices are very helpful and comprehensive. Appendices 3 (Character Assessment) and 6 (Local Green Spaces) are particularly distinctive in the context of the wider 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 in a position 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 my 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 SKPOL1

The policy is generally well-presented.

However, is there a degree of internal tension between criteria b) and c)?

In criterion e) are the 'existing open countryside views' defined? Are they those in Appendix 7?

If they are not defined how does the Parish Council anticipate that the District Council would apply this criterion in a clear and consistent fashion throughout the Plan period?

Policy SKPOL2

I understand the purpose behind this policy.

However, is it a land use consideration?

In any event how would the District Council administer the policy through the development management process?

Policy SKPOL4

Does the Plan have any view about what might constitute 'small scale and/or low intensity' activities?

Does the Parish Council have any comments on the additional criterion as proposed by the County Council?

Policy SKPOL5

The policy is generally well-constructed.

However, the first criterion is very specific and relates to achieving an accreditation which is not directly related to the planning system. I can see that the Natural England accreditation system is detailed in paragraph 8.3.1.8.

On this basis I am minded to recommend that the first criterion takes on a more general nature (relating to improved landscaping and biodiversity).

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy SKPOL7

The design of this policy has a different format from the other policies in the Plan. Indeed, as submitted it is not written in policy format.

On this basis I am minded to recommend that the policy becomes more freestanding in its nature and that the Local Plan context is consolidated in paragraph 9.3.2.1.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy SKPOL9

In the second sentence should 'and/or development' read 'and/or redevelopment'? Otherwise its approach is confusing.

The Baker's Arms is a commercial facility whereas the other two facilities are community facilities.

Should the policy reflect this commercial use with some reference to viability?

Policy SKPOL10

The quality of the survey work/appendix underpinning the policy is first-class.

Policy SKPOL12

Does this policy add any distinctive value either to national or local policy?

In any event, is the control of outdoor advertising and signage a matter for a neighbourhood plan to address?

Policy SKPOL13

As submitted, SKPOL13 is not a policy.

I am minded to recommend that the policy becomes more freestanding in its nature and that the Local Plan context is consolidated in paragraph 11.3.1.1.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy SKPOL14

As SKPOL13

I am minded to recommend that the policy becomes more freestanding in its nature and that the Local Plan context is consolidated in paragraph 11.3.2.1.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy SKPOL16

As SKPOL13

I am minded to recommend that the policy becomes more freestanding in its nature and that the Local Plan context is consolidated in paragraph 11.3.3.1.

Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

General

The front cover describes the Plan as the 'Somerset Keynes Parish Council NDP'

Paragraph 2.4 describes the Plan as the 'Somerset Keynes NDP'

The header describes the Plan as the 'Somerset Keynes and Shorncote NDP'

Which is the correct title of the Plan?

Representations

Does the Parish Council wish to comment on any of the representations made to the Plan?

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 25 February 2020. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It is intended to maintain the momentum of the examination.

In the event that certain responses are available before others I am 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

Somerset Keynes Neighbourhood Development Plan.

10 February 2020