

Wickham Market Neighbourhood Development Plan

Independent Examiner's Clarification Note

Context

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 is very well-presented. The distinction between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. Photographs produced to a high quality reinforce the issues included in the Plan. This result in a very interesting document. The various Appraisals are particularly helpful and informative supporting documents.

The Plan provides a clear and distinctive vision for the neighbourhood area and has focused on appropriate and distinctive matters.

Points for Clarification and other comments on the policies

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 some initial issues for clarification for the Parish Council.

The comments that are made on these points will be used to assist in the preparation of my report. They will also inform any potential modifications that may be necessary to the Plan to ensure that it meets the basic conditions.

Policy WICK1

The ambition of the policy is self-evident.

However, is part B of the policy needed given the details in Policies WICK 12 and 13?

Similarly, is Part C of the policy needed as it restates local plan policies?

Policy WICK2

This is a very well-considered policy which is underpinned by the Landscape Character Appraisal?

Is it intended that the policy would be applied in a proportionate way?

Should the policy refer to 'enhancements' where this approach is both reasonable and practicable? Otherwise, it may be difficult to apply consistently.

Policy WICK4

Is it intended that part A the policy would be applied in a proportionate way? By way of example a proposal for a new shopfront would not directly relate to this part of the policy.

Policy WICK6

The policy includes a good selection of local green spaces based on the related Assessment document.

I am minded to recommend that the policy element is modified so that it takes the matter-of-fact approach in 103 of the NPPF. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy WICK7

Part A of the policy is a comment rather than a policy. I am minded to recommend that parts A and B of the policy are combined to remedy this issue. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Does part D of the policy bring any added value beyond national and local policies on conservation areas?

Policy WICK8

For my clarity does part A of the policy relate to the 18 assets listed in paragraph 6.12? If so are 17 and 18 'heritage assets' in the overall context of this policy?

Has the Parish Council assessed Part B of the policy against paragraph 203 of the NPPF?

Policy WICK9

Does this policy bring any added value beyond the contents of the Suffolk County Council Parking Guidance?

Policy WICK10

Should part B of the policy be supporting text given that it explains how Part A of the policy might be implemented rather than being a policy in its own right?

Policy WICK11

This is a very good policy.

Site Assessment

Is the Parish Council satisfied that the Site Selection report remains up-to-date and can be provides robust evidence to justify the sites selected and discounted?

Is there a degree of tension between the proposed housing allocations and the contents of Policies WICK 3 and 8?

Is the Parish Council satisfied that the two allocated sites are available for development and will be developed in the Plan period?

Policy WICK12

Criterion d comments about the Old School House. To what extent has the policy assessed its inherent value as a proposed non-designated heritage asset and the way in which this may affect both the principle of development and influence the design and layout of the site?

Should the contents of paragraph 8.7 be weaved into the policy?

Policy WICK13

Should the policy comment about the relationship between the proposed new houses and the existing houses in Simon's Cross to the east?

Have the contents of criterion e and paragraph 8.12 been overtaken by events?

In criterion d is the bridleway that which runs along the western boundary of Simon's Cross?

Should the contents of paragraph 8.13 be weaved into the policy?

Representations

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

I would find it helpful if the Parish Council commented on the representations from:

- Anglian Water
- East Suffolk Council;
- Suffolk Wildlife Trust;
- Berlain Ltd; and
- Colin Carter (both generally and on the Site Assessment in particular).

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses to the various questions by 24 March 2023. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It reflects the factual basis of the questions raised.

If 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 can all responses be sent to me by East Suffolk Council and make direct reference to the policy/issue concerned.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

Wickham Market Neighbourhood Development Plan

16 February 2023