

Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan Examination

on behalf of Fenland District Council (FDC) and Whittlesey Town Council (WTC)



Examiner's clarifying questions

Responses are invited to the following questions from Whittlesey TC and Fenland DC as appropriate.

Question 1

Policy 6 – As written, the policy does not indicate a preferred location for the proposed country park, but I have noted from paragraph 3.6.2 that planning permission exists for it under reference F/YR14/0991/F on land south and west of Eastrea Road. A web search shows that this was in connection with a Sainsbury's supermarket. Could the Council(s) explain the current status of the proposal. If the location is now fixed, is there any reason why the policy should not be amended accordingly (and the site shown on a map)?

Response

FDC and WTC understand that the proposed country park specified in F/YR14/0991/F was tied to the trading of the associated food store under that, and subsequent related permissions, which are no longer to be taken forward.

Following the approval of F/YR14/0991/F there have been planning permissions on broadly the same area of land covered by the food store. These include a mixed-use business park (F/YR15/0054/O) and more recently for 203 dwellings (F/YR21/0654/F).

There was a considerable amount of public interest in the country park when proposed as part of F/YR14/0991/F with over forty volunteers identified, and a committee (including a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary) and constitution were established. Although it has yet to come forward these important building blocks for the country park are still in place. The attached PDF plan shows one of the options considered by the committee.

The location as shown in F/YR14/0991/F is still seen as the preferred site for the country park. This is because the land is situated within Flood Zone 3 and therefore unlikely to be suitable for other types of development, it provides and confirms a natural 'barrier' between the settlements of Whittlesey and Eastrea and can be reached relatively easily and sustainably by a significant number of people in the locality. In addition, and importantly, the land agent for the owner has indicated they will still be willing to sell the land at an affordable price.

Policy 6 has been drafted in case an alternative site were to come forward which satisfied the need for a country park for the town. Nonetheless both FDC and WTC would welcome the allocation of land for a country park in the Neighbourhood Plan (in line with that shown in F/YR14/0991/F) as both councils now consider that there is sufficient certainty for the country park to come forward within the plan period to 2040.

Should this be specifically allocated, FDC and WTC consider that Policy 6 would still leave the door open should any alternative sites for a country park subsequently come forward. If the site is to be allocated FDC and WTC would request that additional wording in the policy be provided (broadly along these lines): "The allocated site for the country park should provide suitable access, car

parking arrangements and foot and cycle links to the surrounding public rights of way and national cycle route network and nearby residential development.”

Question 2

Policy 10 - On the face of it, there is little in this policy which adds anything to Local Plan Policy LP14(B). Given the stated intention to avoid unnecessary duplication (which I commend), can the Council(s) explain what purpose the inclusion of this policy is intended to serve.

Response

FDC and WTC agree with the Examiner that the contents of Policy 10: Flood Risk are adequately covered in Policy LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland – Part (B) Flood Risk and Drainage, and in the adopted Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document. FDC and WTC would therefore have no objection to the policy being removed from the draft Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan.

A response to these questions by Friday 28 October would be much appreciated.

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Independent Examiner
17 October 2022