

Stamford 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 distinctive vision for the town based on its character and heritage assets, its retail offer and its setting on the River Welland.

The presentation of the Plan is very good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. The Plan makes good use of photographs and includes maps to highlight particular matters.

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 Town Council/Stamford First. There is also a joint question for the Town Council and the District 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.

Questions for Stamford Town Council/Stamford First

Policy 1

The policy clearly intends to add value to the approach for the development of the sites concerned as allocated in the adopted Local Plan.

How does the Plan seek to add local value to the relevant policies in the Local Plan on the one hand without being too prescriptive on the other hand?

Does the Town Council have any comments on the representations made by the Burghley House Preservation Trust, Rutland County Council and the District Council on the details included within this policy?

Policy 5

What evidence did the Town Council use to define the River Welland Green Corridor?

How was this approach refined between the pre-submission plan and the submission plan?

The third part of the policy offers support to leisure/recreational/wildlife related development. The fourth part of the policy refers generally to development which would have an unacceptable impact on the Corridor's character and appearance.

In this context does the fourth part of the policy refer to all development or more specifically to leisure/recreational/wildlife related development (as captured in the third part of the policy) which would have an unacceptable impact on the River Welland?

In a broader context would development in the proposed River Welland Green Corridor already be controlled by its location within the river floodplain?

Policy 6

Various elements of the supporting text in paragraphs 10.8 to 10.15 and in the table on page 51 use the expressions open space, important open space and important green space in what appears to be an interchangeable fashion. Please can the Town Council advise on its thinking on this matter in general, and the way in which it relates to the District Council's terminology of open space in Policy OS1 of the adopted Local Plan?

There is an additional question on this policy later in this Note.

Policy 7

I saw the attractiveness and vibrancy of the primary shopping frontages during the visit. The policy sets out a positive approach towards the future vitality and viability of the town centre.

I am minded to recommend modifications to some of the details in the policy to reflect the updated Use Classes Order (2020) in general, and the introduction of the new E Use Class in particular. Does the Town Council have any comments on this proposition?

Should the first and the second parts of the policy recognise that some of the developments which the policy has in mind may not constitute development (for example the occupation of a vacant shop unit with another shop) or benefit from permitted development?

Is the third part of the policy intended to be a free-standing policy or supporting text to expand on the way in which the second part of the policy would be interpreted?

Policy 8

This is generally a good policy which responds well to the historic environment.

I am minded to recommend that it acknowledges that planning permission may not be required for all the works specified.

Does the Town Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy 9

This policy takes a positive approach to the rich heritage in the neighbourhood area.

Whilst the supporting text in Section 12 refers in a general sense to the town's conservation areas it makes no specific mention of the Stamford Northfields Conservation Area. To remedy this matter, I am minded to recommend that paragraphs 12.1 and 12.8 of the Plan provide additional information on this matter and that the Stamford Northfields Conservation Area is incorporated into Map 6 (or shown on a separate Map).

Does the Town Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy 10

I looked at the identified views carefully during the visit to the neighbourhood area.

Are Views 1/2/3 consistent with the strategic residential development to the north of the town in the adopted Local Plan and as reflected in Policy 1 of the submitted Plan?

Policy 13

I saw the pressure on the town centre car parks during the visit and can understand the purpose of the policy.

For clarity does the second part of the policy suggest that some limited development could take place in existing car parks where the overall availability of parking spaces was retained?

If this is so, would the Town Council support development proposals which retained the car parking provision above or below any such proposed development in an existing car park?

Policies 14/15/16

The ambitions of these policies are self-evident.

For clarity I am minded to recommend that the reference to 'have considered' is replaced with 'meet the following criteria'. On this basis each of the three policies would become criteria-based rather than simply requiring that a developer considered the matters concerned.

Does the Town Council have any comments on this proposition?

General matters

Representations STNP4/10/22/24 raise a series of overlapping corrections and proof-reading matters.

My approach to examinations is to include a general recommended modification to allow the local planning authority (here the District Council) and the qualifying body (here the Town Council) to make any consequential modifications to the Plan which arise from any of the specific modifications, to correct factual errors and to remedy any proof-reading matters.

Does the Town Council have any comments on the details in the four representations?

In particular is the Town Council content for the general recommended modification to refer to the details included in the four representations?

Question for Stamford Town Council and the District Council

The representations from the District Council and the Longhurst Group comment about the way in which the approach to open spaces evolved between the pre-submission plan and the submitted plan. The representations also comment about the relationship between the policy and the approach in Policy OS1 of the adopted Local Plan. In this context please can the two councils provide me with:

- an agreed factual note which advises on the relationship between the open spaces identified in the submission plan and those in the Stamford neighbourhood area in the South Kesteven Open Space Study 2008 and the Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Report 2017.
- a separate schedule of the additional open spaces included in the submitted plan over and above those included in the pre-submission plan; and
- a separate schedule of any open spaces which were proposed in the pre-submission plan which have not been carried forward into the submission plan.

Representations

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

In particular does it wish to comment on the representations from:

- The Longhurst Group/Cecil Estate Family Trust (STNP2);
- Burghley House Preservation Trust (STNP3);
- Rutland County Council (STNP7);
- F.H. Gilman and Co (STNP12); and
- South Kesteven District Council (STNP24).

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 4 June 2021. 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

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13 May 2021