

Broomfield 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 clear and concise vision for the neighbourhood area. The relationship between the objectives and the policies is helpfully described in Section 1 of the Plan.

The presentation of the Plan is first-class. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. The Plan makes excellent use of various high-quality maps and photographs.

The Plan is underpinned by several detailed studies. The Local Green Space Assessment and the Review of Valued Landscapes and Key Views are particularly important to the wider approach taken in the Plan. This is best practice and provides assurance to all concerned that the Plan is supported by appropriate information and evidence.

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 able 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 the examination 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 BFD1

The policy takes a positive approach towards the continued separation of Broomfield from Chelmsford to the south.

Policy BFD3

The policy addresses an important sub-regional matter. Nevertheless, is it necessary for the policy to be included in the Plan given the status of the Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document which is already administered by the City Council through the development management process?

Policy BFD7

This is an excellent policy which is underpinned by the Review of Local Green Spaces.

I saw the importance of the various green spaces to the character of the parish during the visit.

Policy BFD8

I note that the figures on housing mix in the policy are informed by the Housing Needs Assessment. Nevertheless, could they be rounded up so that they are less mathematical in their format? Plainly such an approach would be very helpful in relation to proposals just over the ten-house threshold.

Policy BFD9

Is the second part of the policy required as the provision of broadband to new buildings is now addressed nationally in the Building Regulations?

Policy BFD10

The policy is commendably ambitious, and the supporting text explains how the community's proposals for the site have been developed.

In this broader context:

- is the proposed package of uses commercially viable?
- is there a local and active Community Land Trust with the willingness and capacity to proceed as set out in the policy?
- what is the current position in relation to the delivery of a GP surgery on the site?
- has the Parish Council assessed the impact of the proposed development on the amenity of the existing residential properties in Saxon Way?

Policy BFD11

This is an excellent policy and will do much to improve the quality of design in the parish.

The combination of the policy, the Design Guidelines and the Development Design checklist represent an excellent local response to Section 12 of the NPPF.

Policy BFD13

I looked at the proposed Special Character Areas carefully during the visit.

The policy carefully captures their character in a positive and non-prescriptive fashion.

Policy BFD14

This is another good policy which responds positively to the details about one of the identified Special Character Areas in Policy BFD13.

Policy BFD17

The policy takes a positive approach towards hydroelectricity schemes.

For clarity, does the policy relate to the various proposals listed in paragraph 12.18 of the Plan or is hydroelectricity defined elsewhere in the Plan?

Community Actions

The various Actions address a series of important local issues and, in several cases, complement the land use policies

Representations

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

It would be helpful if the Parish Council responded to the representations from:

- Essex County Council;
- Roka Nixy (via IBA Planning); and
- Obsidian Strategic Asset Management Limited

The City Council proposes a series of revisions to certain policies in the Plan. It would be helpful if the Parish Council commented on the suggested revisions.

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses to the questions raised by 15 August 2024. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It is intended to maintain the momentum of the examination.

If certain responses are available before others, I would be 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 City 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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18 July 2024