

Consultation response

Ottery St Mary and West Hill Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation

Introduction

Somerset County Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

Please find comments from the County Council Acoustics Specialist.

Should you have any queries regarding the comments, please contact Amy Shepherd, Corporate Performance Officer on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Consultation response

The County Council Acoustics Specialist has looked at the NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR THE PARISHES OF OTTERY ST MARY AND WEST HILL and makes the following suggestions with regard to the listed policies and the consideration of noise.

Policy NP1: Development in the Countryside

There appears no mention of tranquillity when considering the countryside in this section of policy or that of Policy NP4. Tranquillity is an attribute identified in section 123 of the NPPF where it states:

'Planning policies and decisions should aim to identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason'.

Although tranquillity is considered a significant asset of landscape and an attribute in a range of policies it only has mention in the plan within the supporting text to Local Green Space (6.19) and then is not associated with any listed site.

In the view of the County Council Acoustics Specialist the insertion of a reference to tranquillity within policy NP1, NP4 (in place of the word 'feel') and within the sections of supporting text, may be helpful as this highlights the need for the consideration of both the aural and visual impacts of any new development. Supporting text might also wish to identify recent consideration of tranquillity as provided in the Landscape Institute Technical Information Note 2017: Tranquillity – An Overview.

Policy NP2: Sensitive, High Quality Design

The County Council Acoustics Specialist would suggest the highlighted addition to this policy:

Applications for development should demonstrate in the planning submission how they meet the following general principles of high quality design:

[.]

Incorporation of design features sufficient to enable any conflicting land uses to coexist

The addition above is suggested so as to prevent the failure of a housing developer to design to adequately mitigate against the noise impacts from other established land uses. This may arise within the plan area if residential development occurs close to a commercial activity or arises from conversion of a farm building and remains in the presence of an active farm or one with other diversified development. In the view of the County Council Acoustics Specialist NPPF advice does not adequately replace the consideration once given to this issue in the repealed PPG24. It has therefore been left to local policy to identify that new housing may have a need to incorporate special measures if conflicting land uses are to successfully coexist. The text associated with this policy might also wish to highlight the recent acoustic advice provided in ProPG Professional Practice Guidance on Planning & Noise - New Residential Development.

The County Council Acoustics Specialist hopes these comments are helpful.