

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR THE PARISHES OF OTTERY ST  
MARY AND WEST HILL**

EXAMINER: MARY O'ROURKE BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

Ms J Talbot  
Ottery St Mary and West Hill Neighbourhood Plan Lead

Examination Ref: 02/MOR/ONP

Via email: [REDACTED]  
cc: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

16 January 2018

Dear Ms Talbot

Questions to Ottery St Mary and West Hill Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

Following my site visit on 4 January to Ottery St Mary and West Hill and having undertaken initial preparation on the Neighbourhood Plan examination I am seeking the views and assistance of the Working Group in providing clarification and answers to my questions set out below.

1. The Proposals Map and Insets are at Appendix 1 to the Plan. The Proposals Map shows that there is an Alfington Inset Plan, and policy NP27 refers to land at Devon Mushroom Farm, Alfington, on the Alfington Inset (Appendix 1). However, I can find no inset for Alfington in either the electronic version of the Plan on the East Devon website nor in the hard copy that I have been sent. Is there one and if so, where can it be found?
2. Please confirm that the Inset Map for West Hill in Appendix 1 is that submitted to the examination of the East Devon Villages Plan and no modifications relating to West Hill are recommended by the Inspector in the Main Modifications.
3. Policy NP1 refers to development in the countryside not being allowed '*other than in exceptional circumstances*'. There is no justification or explanation in the supporting text of the Plan as to what might be determined '*exceptional circumstances*' and the term appears to go beyond Local Plan Strategy 7 of the Local Plan, national policy in the NPPF and policy NP4 of the Plan. Regrettably, unless you can point me to the evidence that justifies this approach in the Plan submission documentation, I will be minded to delete this policy.
4. Please clarify by way of a scaled map on an OS base the boundaries and extent of the area between Ottery St Mary and West Hill intended to be covered by the settlement containment policy NP4 as the Inset Maps in the Plan are unclear.
5. Policy NP5 of the Plan allocates 24 Local Green Spaces which are identified on the Proposals Map Insets. Of these, 3 spaces (v, w and x) are noted as being under construction and where in respect of v and w, '*detailed identification of LGS on the map to be provided later*'. The 3 areas shown on the Inset Maps are extensive and include newly built houses and estate roads. Would the Working Group please provide plans showing the precise green areas or open spaces that are intended to be subject to policy NP5 and provide evidence as why they are considered to be demonstrably special and hold particular local significance? I am also

unclear what early consultation has taken place with the landowners, having regard to the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), reference ID 37-01920140306.

6. Some of the LGSs listed in policy NP5 are school playing fields and/or play areas. I would appreciate a response from the Working Group on the representation made by Gladman Developments Ltd that their designation as LGS could prejudice any future expansion of the schools onto those areas to meet any future capacity needs.
7. Policy NP6 seeks to protect valued views listed in Appendix 2. However, many of the descriptions are very general, potentially covering wide swathes of countryside and making it difficult for a reader to accurately identify the viewpoints. The background papers listed on the East Devon Council's webpage include some protected views cone maps, albeit they look like field notes. As submitted, in the absence of a clear plan identifying the viewpoints for the 16 locally valued views, I find that the Plan lacks the necessary clarity to allow a decision maker to apply policy NP6 with any confidence and consistency. Is the Working Group able to provide a plan to redress this deficiency?
8. Policy NP25 of the Plan seeks to safeguard some 6.64ha of land to the west of Kings School for education or community use. Representations made by Devon County Council, as landowner, indicate that there is no education or community need to justify an allocation significantly larger than the adopted Local Plan allocation of 3.27ha. In the absence of further justification for Policy NP25 I am minded to delete this policy.
9. As submitted, there are spread through the Plan 14 Projects boxes which set out actions that the Town Council and Parish Council intend to take in respect of various matters, such as enhancing road safety, developing green infrastructure proposals, supporting youth facilities, and setting up a Heritage Action Group. Whilst they address functions that are within the remit of the Councils, the Neighbourhood Plan itself is to deal solely with policies and proposals relating to the use and development of land and, when made, will form part of the statutory development plan. For these reasons, and subject to providing opportunity for the Working Group to comment further, I am minded to recommend that the Projects, and their supporting text, rather than being spread through the main body of the Plan, would be better, and more appropriately, placed in a separate section, following the policies, entitled Community Projects or Aspirations as per PPF reference ID 41-004-20170728.

In order to ensure the examination is not delayed, I would be grateful to receive the Steering Group's response by 30 January 2018. At this stage, whilst there are several issues I will need to consider further, providing these can be dealt with through exchange of correspondence, I am satisfied the examination should proceed by way of written representation.

In the interests of transparency, may I prevail upon you to ensure a copy of both this letter and the respective response (in due course) are placed on the relevant public website(s).

Your sincerely

Mary O'Rourke

*Mary O' Rourke*

Examiner