

AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Community Fulfilment

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Our Ref: 03/04/Neighbourhood Planning/Ickford



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Sent by email to localplanconsult@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk

Dear the neighbourhood plan examiner,

Re: Ickford Neighbourhood Development Plan –Submission (Regulation 16)

This letter sets out AVDC's agreed formal response to the Ickford Neighbourhood Development Plan (INP) Submission plan. This builds upon the ongoing dialogue between AVDC and the Ickford Parish Council since the plan started to be prepared in earnest. The table overleaf set out comments in order of each part of the plan.

The INP provides policy direction for how the community wish to see Ickford develop to 2033. We commend the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group on the hard work in getting to this stage and welcome the general approach and direction given in the plan. The queries and suggested changes in these representations are to try to further improve the plan as well as to assist the INP towards fully meeting the basic conditions.

I trust the below points and suggestions are clear but please contact me if you wish to discuss anything.

Yours sincerely

David Broadley
Senior Planning Officer (Planning Policy)
Community Fulfilment

Table 1. comments on the Submission Plan

Document: Submission Plan		
Page	Para	Comment
9	PARAS 2.2, 2.3	<p><i>There needs to be a change to these paragraphs as there is speculation on the route here despite no route announcement for the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway. In 2018 a preferred ‘corridor’ was announced, within which there will be a preferred route.</i> The next step in the process is route identification by the Department for Transport and Highways England. However, the public consultation has been delayed from autumn 2019. Highway England are expected to provide a further update in early 2020 on the timeline and any implications to the programme.</p> <p>It is speculation to make any assumptions on the route at this stage.</p> <p>In 2.3 there is also unhelpful speculation about future housing and employment growth locations at a location ‘East of Oakley’ – VALP is the strategic development plan in Buckinghamshire, any other plans whether they be by Highways England or other agencies are not part of the statutory development plan. The Expressway does not form part of VALP and the implications of it are most likely to be tackled in a future review of VALP (see paragraph 7.20 of VALP as Modified https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/MASTER%20main%20mods%20VALP%20final_1.pdf).</p>
14	OBJECTIVES	<p>Environment.</p> <p>The reference to flood risk reduction could be made more specific, i.e ‘to reduce flood risk to properties within the village’ or ‘to minimise the areas at risk of flooding from all sources’</p>
18	PARA 6.19	<p><i>Thame Valley Extension Biodiversity Opportunity Area</i></p> <p>http://www.buckinghamshirepartnership.gov.uk/media/1022723/Thame%20Valley%20Extension.pdf)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We suggest an addition to 6.19 or an addition to Policy NE2 : 'Developments must not prevent the aims of</i>

		<p><i>the Thame Valley Biodiversity opportunity area from being achieved which includes the management and restoration of rivers/streams, lowland meadows, hedgerows, ponds and arable field margins, or their creation where appropriate'.</i></p> <p><i>This would bring the policy more into line with the VALP Policy NE1 (i) as Modified which looks at all the BOAs and how development can help achieve the aims of the particular BOA.</i></p>
19	<p>POLICY NE2 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE & BIODIVERSITY</p>	<p><i>Biodiversity Net Gain</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>AVDC suggests a change to text Policy NE2 so that it reads as follows:</i> <p><i>'Development proposals must provide appropriate green infrastructure which results in a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity, which provides or enhances connectivity between green spaces. In addition green infrastructure that contributes to flood mitigation will be requested. The use of a recognised habitat impact assessment will be required to assess any development impacts and produce the net gains for biodiversity required.'</i></p> <p><i>Reason: We suggest omission of the reference to species richness and abundance as this conflicts with net gain (focuses on habitats as a proxy for species) and is simpler.</i></p> <p><i>AVDC also suggests making reference to the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity SPD' which will come into force after VALP is adopted and set out how a net gain will be achieved.</i></p>
23	<p>POLICY BEH1: HERITAGE ASSETS</p>	<p><i>THE Neighbourhood Plan attaches great weight to the conservation of heritage assets. Planning applications which result in the loss of, cause</i></p> <p>1) unacceptable <i>harm to, or negatively impact on, the significance of heritage assets (designated and non-designated) will be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that the 2) substantial harm is necessary and is outweighed by the 3) substantial public benefits of a scheme.</i></p> <p>4) Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the heritage asset should be treated favourably.</p> <p>AVDC's comments with regard to the sections of the policy highlighted in bold above also numbered:</p>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) All harm is unacceptable under the Act/NPPF (unless the other tests apply) therefore the bolded word should be removed 2) The test referred to refers to the less than substantial harm (but there is also another test re securing optimum viable use), the test for substantial harm is different, depending on the asset type, I suggest that the removal of the bolded word could address this key issue, which otherwise leaves all other harm (most is less than substantial anyway) acceptable 3) This word (substantial) is not in the NPPF and should be removed, it isn't substantial benefit, just that it should outweigh the harm 4) I don't think this makes sense at all, it isn't just positive proposals within the setting which would be favourable <p>The concept of "setting" in relation to Non-Designated Heritage Assets/Listed Buildings/Archaeology should be explained within the policy and elsewhere in relation to archaeology and Non-designated heritage assets so these are included in consideration of any proposals.</p> <p>This policy needs to be clear it relates to designated heritage assets, specifically Listed Buildings (given the later policies to other heritage assets and the references which in the NPPF relate to designated, vs Non-designated Heritage Assets)</p> <p>The Policy needs to acknowledge the areas of potential archaeological interest – there are significant Archaeological Notification Areas in the parish just beyond the village itself – these are areas of Ridge and Furrow.</p> <p>AVDC also considers Policy BEH1 is duplicating the NPPF 2019 and so is contrary to para 16 (f) which requires plan avoiding unnecessary duplication of the NPPF.</p>
25	POLICY BE4: NON	<i>The Neighbourhood Plan identifies buildings and structures that have local heritage significance by virtue of their local historical and/or architectural value to the local community1): "Buildings of Local Note" in</i>

<p>DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS</p>	<p><i>Appendix 4. Proposals that result 2) in a scale of harm to, or loss of, the building 3 or structure and its setting that has not had full regard to its significance as a heritage asset will be resisted. A balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. Developments affecting a 4) non designated (I added this) heritage asset should achieve a high quality in design which respects and complements the heritage context in terms of scale, massing, design, detailing and use.</i></p> <p>Where possible ridge and furrow should be retained.</p> <p>AVDC comments with regard to the sections of the policy highlighted in bold above also numbered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) There are other aspects of interest which the preceding sentence doesn't reflect, communal etc. – this phrasing relates to Listed Buildings and therefore suggest needs to be altered and is it value to community specifically or just generally meeting Historic England criteria but identified by the community 2) This doesn't make sense and needs clarification. 3) We consider the policy could include ridge and furrow as a Non-Designated Asset has but these terms not sure they'd be considered structures so perhaps a different term to buildings and structures? 4) Should this be Non-Designated as (given Conservation Area design policy, but the Neighbourhood Plan may wish to say similar for the Listed Buildings (i.e. BEH1) 5) We agree with this but if the neighbourhood plan wishes to identify as Non-Designated Heritage Asset then surely the same assessment as earlier in the policy would apply, or if the plan doesn't want to go that far then these assets shouldn't be a Non-Designated Heritage Asset, but should be highlighted as of heritage interest etc. (possibly more comfortable given point 3) <p>AVDC also considers Policy BEH4 is duplicating the NPPF 2019 and so is contrary to para 16 (f) which requires plan avoiding unnecessary duplication of the NPPF.</p>
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26	POLICY F1 FLOODING	<p>Rivers and Stream Corridors</p> <p>AVDC Comment: Watercourses including main rivers and ordinary watercourses fall within the Ickford Neighbourhood Plan area. These, in line with VALP Policy NE2, must be conserved, enhanced and protected to benefit the water environment as below and designed and managed to benefit biodiversity. Therefore suggested addition to Policy F1:</p> <p><i>'Development proposals adjacent to or containing a watercourse shall provide or retain a 10m ecological buffer zone (more information is provided within the Watercourse Advice Note Supplementary Planning Document). Ecological buffer zones conserve, enhance and protect the water environment and should be designed and managed to enhance their value for biodiversity.'</i></p> <p>This is in line with VALP Policy NE2 on River and Stream Corridors.</p>
26	POLICY F1 FLOODING	<p>The Policy should refer to the sequential test, likely effects of climate change & highlight that, where a flood risk assessment is needed, the suitability of conventional Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) will need to be explored at site-level given the hydrogeological characteristics of the parish.</p> <p>AVDC also considers this Policy is essentially repeating/duplicating VALP Policy NE2 on River and Stream Corridors and so runs contrary to paragraph 16 (f) of the NPPF 2019.</p>
28		<p>Features for wildlife including bats, birds and hedgehogs</p> <p>AVDC Comment: Within Section 9 on 'New Development' , we would suggest this could be improved by the addition of the following: (perhaps a new paragraph between 9.5 and 9.6) to say :</p> <p><i>'Species-specific features need to be incorporated within all developments. Simple inexpensive measures for priority species can result in significant gains, for example bat boxes, bird boxes and hedgehog highways integrated into the fabric of buildings and boundary treatments'.</i></p> <p>Or as an alternative these could be added into Policy NE2 instead.</p>

30-31	POLICY ND3: NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT	<p>Concerning this penultimate bullet of the policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide affordable housing which meets at least the minimum level identified in the local plan; <p>AVDC suggest should be changed just be <u>'in line with the requirements of'</u> the local plan</p> <p>As it is worded it does not reference the thresholds in terms of size of site and number of dwellings to trigger affordable housing, it rather implies all new housing development must provide at least the minimum level.</p>
30-31	POLICY ND3: NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT	<p>The word “proportionally” should be added between ‘Contributes’ and ‘towards’ in the final bullet to make it clear the level of contribution will be proportionate to the impact of development following application of the tests of Planning Obligations.</p> <p>On Policy ND3 AVDC considers that in saying <i>Provide affordable housing which meets at least the minimum level identified in the local plan</i> this runs contrary to how different the NPPF (2019) is compared to the NPPF (2012) which the VALP has been based on. The neighbourhood plan needs to meet the 2019 NPPF on planning for affordable housing. This is mainly in Chapter 5 of the NPPF 2019: for example para 64 and the 10% requirement for affordable home ownership is something that isn’t in VALP.</p>
33	AFFORDABLE HOUSING	<p>AVDC comment:</p> <p>The figures provided in the paragraph below may be inaccurate and are quite fluid. The number of rented Trust properties as people buy and tenures change, the figures quoted are from Bucks Home Choice which recently changed its eligibility criteria so will be much changed.</p> <p>AVDC would suggest changed to paragraph 9.21 as follows:</p> <p>9.21. There are 30 affordable homes in Ickford, all of them socially rented from the Vale of Aylesbury</p>

		<p>Housing Association Trust. 26 households on the Housing Register within the West Aylesbury Vale sub-group have a local connection to Ickford. This does not necessarily mean that they wish to be housed in the village. A full Housing Needs Survey would reveal if there is a specific current need for affordable homes in Ickford, however, the new affordable homes that will come forward as part of AVDC's Local Plan allocation and the recent permission granted on appeal.<i>[AVDC comment: This sentence seems incomplete]</i> It is imperative that some new less expensive market homes are made available, such as small terrace or semi-detached dwellings to redress the balance in the housing stock will provide some additional units in the village.<i>[AVDC comment: this sentence seems incomplete]</i></p>
33	POLICY ND4 HOUSING MIX AND AFFORDABILITY	<p>AVDC considers this policy could be made more effective and clear by adding the following (new text in bold but also restructure as bullets)</p> <p>In new residential developments there should be a variety of dwelling types and sizes. In particular, schemes will be supported which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contain smaller less expensive market homes suitable for young families and • provide affordable housing for rent and home ownership in line with the Council's policies
36	Policy TT1 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT	<p>The Council considers the policy isn't particularly needed as it duplicates VALP Policy T5 'Delivering Transport in New Development' - the VALP policy essentially says the same things as the drafted Ickford NP policy. There is also there is reference to VALP car parking standards being in an SPD but the VALP has been Modified and the car parking standards appear in Policy T6 'Vehicle Parking' and Appendix B. Therefore there is no deferring to another document like an SPD, the standards are known now as they are in the VALP as Modified and will have full weight once the plan has been adopted.</p> <p>https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/MASTER%20main%20mods%20VALP%20final_1.pdf</p>
36	Policy TT1 TRAFFIC AND	<p>Traffic calming infrastructure and new pavements can only be required where necessary as per the tests for planning obligations, as such 'and necessary' should follow 'where appropriate'. The standards of</p>

	TRANSPORT	parking provision should be in line with the adopted standards in the Buckinghamshire County Council Guidance 2015 until they are superseded by specifications brought forward as part of VALP, unless local evidence is available justifying a differing standard. A definition of ‘small garage’ should be defined if it is to be included and the stipulations for permeable surfacing should be ‘where appropriate’ as per comments regarding bespoke SuDS above.
	POLICY E1 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES	This policy should specify, or reference a list of, what constitutes ‘economic development’ i.e. those identified in para 11.1? ‘unacceptable’ should be added before ‘negative impact’ in order for the requirements to be flexible enough for use. Similarly, ‘Future developments shall provide potential for internet connection where possible’. The policy should specify if it relates to the whole plan area (parish) or only to development within the settlement boundary.
38	POLICY CF1: COMMUNITY FACILITIES	It is considered some of the community facilities in the ‘Community Aspirations’ (para 13.6) could be added into Policy CF1 to give support for those type of specific new community facilities should they be delivered either as a standalone planning application or via Section 106 contributions. Some of what is listed in para 13.6 falls outside what would be generally termed a ‘community facility’.
38	POLICY CF1: COMMUNITY FACILITIES	The 4 facilities mentioned should be identified on the policies map in the annexes so it is clear for users of the plan not familiar with the local geography, where the facilities are.
39	Para 13.3	It is considered the River Thame Conservation Trust is included as a partner with regard to the River Thame environs https://riverthame.org/ .