

FW: Wendover Neighbourhood Plan

LocalPlanConsult

Fri 8/9/2019 11:25 AM

To: Bennett, Allan [redacted]; Broadley, David [redacted]

1 attachments (2 MB)

Wendover Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Submission.doc

From: Richard Gridley [redacted]

Sent: 02 August 2019 19:07

To: LocalPlanConsult

Subject: Wendover Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Sirs,

Re the Wendover Neighbourhood Plan Submission Version.

Settlement Boundary Pages 33 & 34 & Policy H1 (page 35)

Support for the amended settlement boundary which now follows hard along the rear boundaries of properties in Grenville Avenue and Stanhope Close instead of the previously drawn boundary which diverted to enclose the field North of Ashbrook near Shift Mill which was previously identified as potential 'Green Space B'. It is important to protect this field area from development for a number of reasons (habitat/flood risk etc) some of which have already formed the basis for the Local Planning Authority deeming the site as being inappropriate for development as part of the VALP. My previous comments and arguments made at the time of the initial draft Wendover Neighbourhood Plan Consultation attached for your information.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Gridley

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted contact information]

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Draft Wendover Neighbourhood Plan Consultation

Response from Richard Gridley, [REDACTED]

Comments regarding Green Spaces Policy G.1 (p. 39 & 40) with specific regard to Site B - Field north of Ashbrook, near Shift Mill

Executive summary of comments:

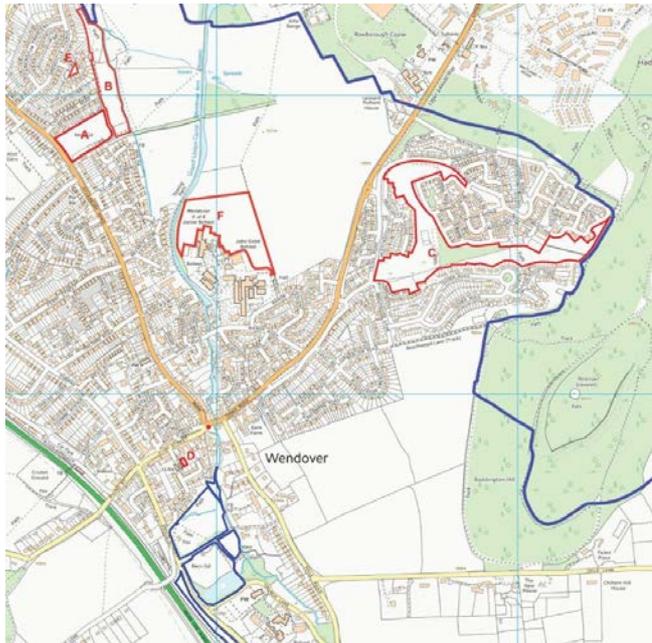
- **Proposed Green Space 'B' – Field North of Ashbrook near Shift Mill is worthy of protection from development and recognition and endorsement of this within the plan is welcomed.**
- **If policy G.1. is felt to be best way of affording protection, consideration should be given to amending the policy wording by replacing the word 'special' with the word 'exceptional.'**
- **Notwithstanding the above, I would question whether protection of site 'B' is best achieved by designation as 'Green Space' within the settlement boundary or by amending the settlement boundary such that this area falls outside the boundary as part of the rural area beyond the settlement.**

As a resident of Wendover, I am naturally interested in and in principle supportive of, the above proposed policy and am pleased to see the plan's commitment to protect the important green spaces at Wendover which do not currently enjoy Green Belt or AONB designation, by affording them 'Designated Green Space' status with an accompanying presumption against development on these five sites (Policy G1).

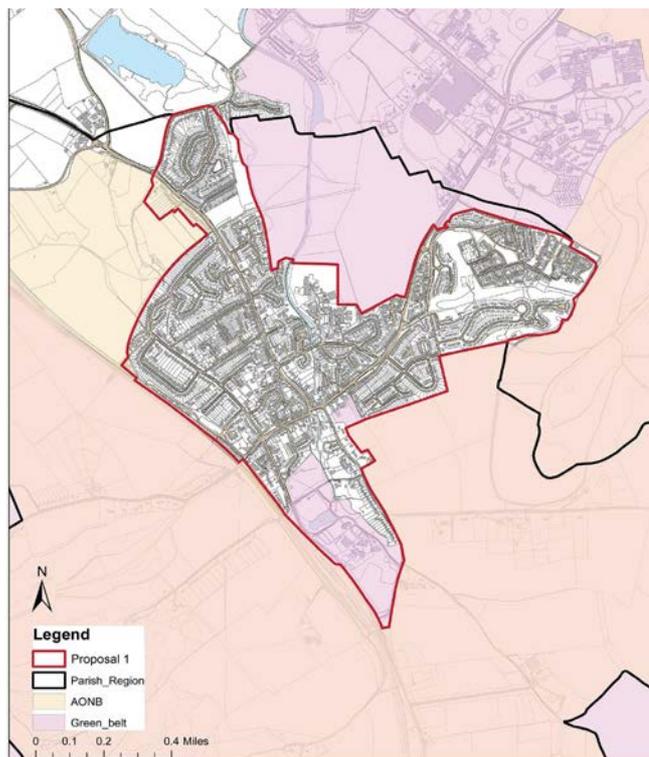
As a resident of Grenville Avenue, I am also particularly interested with specific regard to one of the sites identified – site B, the field North of Ashbrook Recreation Ground near Shift Mill.

I said I was supportive of the policy in principle, because I have some concerns regarding the robustness of the protection afforded to 'site B' by its proposed inclusion within the settlement boundary.

If one refers to Map 5: (Local Green Spaces for designation), on page 39 of the draft plan (reproduced for your info below – hopefully with your permission for the purposes of this response?), it is clear that discounting the special status of the school playing field, all of the other proposed sites are enclosed, or almost enclosed within the existing built up area of Wendover with the exception of site B, which from the map, appears peripheral to the settlement rather than an integral part of it.



It is to be noted that whilst generally tightly following the line of the existing housing boundaries at Wendover, the proposed line of the settlement boundary for some reason, diverts away from the boundaries of the housing to the rear of Grenville Avenue and Stanhope Close and by doing so, specifically includes the land at 'site B' within the settlement boundary. (Map reproduced for info below – again, hopefully with your permission)



This arguably results in a confusing situation and potentially puts two of the plans policies in conflict with one another. On the one hand, the plan and the preceding green spaces report, recognize that the site is of high amenity value and is worthy of being afforded protection from development (Policy G.1). However, the inclusion of the land within the settlement boundary subjects it to policy H.1 (page 33), which states that: *'The Neighbourhood Plan designates the Settlement Boundary Area in Map 3 for the purpose of enabling development within the boundary. Small scale development proposals, up to 10 dwellings, will be supported within the boundary area, provided they meet the other policies of this Neighbourhood Plan and the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan (VALP).'*

In effect, the land is highlighted as being a possible development site in one policy and then potentially ruled out in another. Now it could be argued that policy G.1 will 'trump' policy H. 1 in relation to any proposal to develop this land because policy G.1 states that development here: *'...will not be permitted, other than in very special circumstances'*. However, the use of the word '*special*' arguably weakens what should be a robust policy and perhaps '*exceptional*' would be a better choice in so far as it would be less difficult for a potential developer to make an argument for a 'special' case compared to an 'exceptional' one?

But it must also be remembered that the site was one of the sites considered for suitability for possible development as part of the early stages of the VALP and was rejected partly due to formal flood risk designation, so it has in effect already been dismissed as being suitable for possible development.

So for this and the other reasons I have outlined above, the question arises; "should this area be included within the settlement area or would it not be more consistent and appropriate to draw the line of the settlement boundary hard along the rear of the properties in Grenville Avenue and Stanhope Close so that the area falls outside the boundary where there would appear to be a much stronger presumption against development?"

I mentioned earlier that this site (site B), appears peripheral to the settlement rather than an integral part of it and it will be noted from the photographs below, that unlike some of the other 'Green Space' sites, it does not exhibit an 'urban' character at all, but rather one of a natural rural wetland area albeit on the edge of the settlement. This adds to the debate as to whether it is really appropriate to define it as being within the settlement boundary.

View from footpath crossing 'Site B' (r/o Grenville Avenue/Stanhope Close).



Finally, in part 2 of the 'Local Green Spaces Draft Report' (January 2019), it is noted in the assessment of this area of land that; "*The proposed space is of particular significance because of its richness of wildlife.*" I can confirm that this is undeniably the case as we frequently find newts and other amphibians in our garden adjacent to the site, together with other wild visitors including muntjac deer, foxes and badgers, all of which use the area either as a habitat in its own right, or as a route between one area and another. (See photo of garden visitor below).

Below. Badger visiting at night.



So in summary, whilst I firmly welcome the proposal to protect and retain this area of land for recreational enjoyment and ecological and wildlife conservation, the question I have is whether this would be more effectively and robustly achieved if, rather than being included within the settlement boundary, the settlement boundary was re-drawn hard along the rear boundaries of the properties in Grenville avenue/Stanhope Close, such that the land then fell outside the boundary – in effect confirming its status as ‘open’ countryside in the sense that is beyond the developed ‘footprint’ of Wendover.

In the light of my comments and observations above and given the rural character of the land compared to the other proposed ‘Green Space’ areas and it’s formal designation as an Environment Agency flood risk area, I am sure you will consider these comments carefully with regard to the desirability of protecting this particular open space and I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on this draft plan, which has clearly been the subject of considerable work in its preparation.

Given the Local Planning Authority’s interest in the matter, I am also forwarding a copy of these comments to AVDC Planning Department.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Gridley

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

19th March 2019