

WHITBURN NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Submission Draft Version

Neighbourhood Plan
by Independent Examiner, Rosemary Kidd

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Whitburn Neighbourhood Development Plan

May I thank the Neighbourhood Forum for their very helpful comments in response to the representations, their extensive library of background evidence and the information they have provided.

Following my initial assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan and representations, I would appreciate clarification and comment on the following matters from the Qualifying Body and/or the Local Planning Authority as appropriate. In order to ensure openness and transparency of the examination process, these questions and the responses should be published on the Council website.

In addition to questions, I am including proposed modifications to the wording of policies and the justifications where I consider it necessary, in order to give the QB and/ or LPA the opportunity to respond, if they wish, in advance of receiving my examination report. A full explanation will be included in my examination report of the reasons for proposing the modifications.

1. Would STC provide me with an update on progress with the emerging Local Plan. If it has been withdrawn I shall recommend that all references to its policies in the WNP should be deleted.
2. Would STC provide me with a list of the strategic policies and state whether they accord with current national planning policy.
3. I am concerned about the legibility of the Policies Map and will propose that Inset Maps should be provided to show the boundaries of properties and areas under various policies. The boundaries of all sites and areas referred to in the policies should be shown on maps at a scale that applicants and decision makers can determine whether their site is covered by that policy.
4. A number of the policies are worded as requirements. Except where the policy delivers a requirement in national planning policy, a degree of flexibility should be introduced to the policy to ensure that it is realistic and deliverable.
5. Some policies refer to planning permission being permitted or there is a presumption in favour of a particular development. NPPF para 2 states that planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Neighbourhood plan policies cannot pre-determine planning applications. I shall propose revisions to such policies usually in the form of XXX will be supported
6. Major housing development paragraph 5.16 states that this is 10 homes or more. It would be helpful to include the definition in the Glossary. Would the QB and LPA confirm that it should be the same as that in the Development Management Procedure Order: ***the provision of 10 or more dwellings on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more where the number of dwellings is unknown***
7. Would STC explain the basis for the figure of 397 dwellings to be delivered over the plan period as set out in paragraphs 5.6 and 5.8 of the WNP. Was this the figure from

the withdrawn Local Plan? Should reference to it be deleted from this section? If so, would the QB and STC agree revisions to paras 5.4 to 5.9. Would STC and the QB confirm that an indicative housing figure for the WNP has not been sought.

Policy WNP1 Housing

8. I am proposing that the first paragraph of the policy refer to ***latest Housing***

15. Point f) requires some flexibility to be included in the wording as it will not be possible to apply it to all schemes. I am proposing to revise point f) to read: ***here appropriate and feasible, incorporates landscaping and open space, including***

number of requirements including habitats to be secured for at least 30 years and to be delivered on site, offsite or via statutory biodiversity credits. Would STC and the QB comment on whether additional text should be added to the policy to reflect the legislation and whether a reference to any STC guidance could be included in the justification.

35. European and national sites - such policies are strategic and should therefore be in the LDF / Local Plan. Would STC confirm whether they have up to date policies on these sites. Do STC consider it appropriate to include these policies in the WNP?
36. Wildlife Corridors paras 5.46 5.47 Would STC confirm the status of these strategic corridors and whether the areas mapped in the Wildlife Corridors Network Review December 2020 should be referred to instead of the LDF corridors. If so, the following text may be added to the end of paragraph 5.46:
completed a detailed site by site review of the wildlife corridors in December 2020. These areas are shown on the Policies Map..

Policy WNP7 Green Infrastructure Enhancement and Connectivity

Would the QB and / or STC comment on these as appropriate.

37. Green Belt is not identified as a typology in the GI Strategy. Green Belt is a planning policy to control urban sprawl and not a form of green space or infrastructure. I am proposing to recommend that the bullet point on the Green Belt should be deleted and the Green Belt boundary should not be shown on the Policies Map against Policy WNP7. It may be included in the text of the Plan under paragraphs 3.7 3.8 for information.
38. Trees and hedges I am proposing a revision to the wording of the policy to avoid as follows: Revise the second sentence of
Where development proposals would result in the unavoidable loss of trees or hedgerows, proposals will be supported that seek to replace the trees or hedgerow lost either on the site or elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Area.
39. The last two bullet points are policy statements. I am proposing that they should be set out as an additional paragraph after the bullets ***Green infrastructure may be enhanced through the increase in tree cover and the use of native tree and hedge species. The reinstatement of hedgerows and hedgerow trees will be supported.***
40. Veteran and mature trees. NPPF para 180c) sets out national policy on veteran trees. It is considered unnecessary to repeat it in a neighbourhood plan policy.
41. Would the QB explain how Policy WNP7 is to improve the long term viability of mature trees?
42. The penultimate paragraph is unclear as to how many forms of GI are required. Some flexibility is also needed. I am proposing to revise the penultimate paragraph of the policy to nBT/F1 11Pm0 g0000008869 [a]13(n)13(d)-c8795.2 841.92 reW*nBT/F5 11.04 Tf1 0 0 1 34

50. Would the QB comment on whether this should be revised to Whitburn Local Centre

centre **a** **.**

60. Paragraphs 4 and 5 of the policy relate to t