

Comments

Main Modifications to the Local Plan (18/02/19 to 01/04/19)

Comment by	Wretham Parish Council (Mr Julian Gibson - 1203875)
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Consultation Point	Policy HOU 05 - Small Villages and Hamlets Outside of Settlement Boundaries (View)
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Submission Type	Web
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To which proposed Main Modification does your representation relate? Please state the relevant reference number that you are commenting on from the Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications e.g. MM1

HOU)5 criterion 2. The whole policy as shown in this document is of course out of date, but I am looking at the version in EX.125 (which we hope is the latest one).

**Do you consider the proposed modification is:
(please mark the appropriate box)**

If you consider the proposed Main Modification to be UNSOUND, please identify which test of soundness your representation relates to?

- Is it effective?
- Is it consistent with national policy?

Please give us details as to why you think the Local Plan with proposed modifications is NOT legally compliant or sound?

The term "of an appropriate scale" is undefined and therefor contrary to para. 16(d) of the NPPF. It is a recipe for countless disputes and appeals, and will, my Council feels, end up with the decisions as to what is "appropriate" being taken by the Planning Inspectors rather than allowing local views to carry any weight. This may well be why the Inspector has taken the action he has in deleting the original criterion 3.

Please set out what changes you consider necessary to make the proposed main modifications to the Local Plan legally compliant or sound.

Reinstate original criterion 3. This Plan started its production back in 2013, and has been through several public consultations. In the course of these parish councils were assured that they, as the elected body which is closest to the electorate, would have the opportunity to have input to the decision as to what is "appropriate".

My Council understands that the Inspector has struck out this criteria on the grounds that Parish Councils are not Statutory Consultees, which is true. It seems incredible that Breckland Council failed to consult with the Planning Inspectorate or other Planning Authorities about its intention to include this criterion as worded, and was unaware that, in the view of this particular Inspector, its inclusion would make the whole of the Plan unsound. However, the intention is to ensure that Localism (which is very much last week's news now) is not completely buried, as the Inspector seems to think it should be.

It must be possible to re-word this criterion in such a way that it is clear that the Parish Council does not have a "veto", but is respected for what it is - an elected body (unlike members of the Planning Inspectorate), which is best place to advise on what is "an appropriate scale" for development in its small villages and hamlets.

Alternatively, reintroduce the words "of up to 3 units." This would meet the NPPF requirement by removing ambiguity. Admittedly it would also prevent larger developments in these hamlets, which the Inspector seems to want to happen, possibly because of a lack of knowledge about Breckland, where the whole character of the area is made up by the large number of very small settlements.

My Council feels that, in deleting these two sections the Inspector has demonstrated exactly why it would be wrong to allow the Planning Inspectorate to have sole power to determine how the uncertainty in the Local Plan which he has introduced should be interpreted.

Would you like to be notified of future stages of the Local Plan? No

How would you like to be notified?