

SWANTON MORLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk: Mrs Kelly Pickard
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Susan Heinrich
Neighbourhood Planning Co-Ordinator
Breckland Council
Elizabeth House
Walpole Loke
Dereham
NR19 1EE

10th June 2019

Dear Susan,

SWANTON MORLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Thank you for sight of Mr Edge's letter dated 3rd June 2019 in respect of his ongoing examination of the specific policies in the Swanton Morley Neighbourhood Plan (SMNP). Firstly, it is confirmed that his interpretation of the scope of his examination should be focussed on those policies where Breckland Council has resolved to take a different decision from that of the first examiner (Mr Patrick Whitehead), albeit as Mr Edge rightly points out there may be a need for some further 'read through' modifications to other policies depending on his findings although we hope that such can be kept to a minimum.

As you know, Breckland Council's housing allocations policy (HAP) was amended a few weeks ago (a copy of the relevant extract is attached to this response) which now allows the local lettings policy to be applied to affordable dwellings secured via sites allocated in Neighbourhood Plans in perpetuity. This was not the case at the time the revised SMNP Policy 4 was redrafted a few months ago. For his background information, the SMNP policy still reflects the previous agreed position which was for first let only as this was aligned to the agreed corporate policy in place at the time of the pre-submission publication of the plan and its subsequent submission to Mr Edge.

However, the situation has since shifted and as has been highlighted, there is now a difference between the two positions due to the HAP being updated. As you know, we have discussed this matter at some length and both Breckland Council and Swanton Morley Parish Council are of the view that the Neighbourhood Plan policy should be fully aligned to Breckland Council's latest HAP position, which actually reflects the Parish Council's initial aspirations prior to Mr Whitehead's initial examination. Therefore, both parties consider that the best mechanism to deal with the issue is for Mr Edge to recommend further Modifications as part of his report to bring the SMNP policy back into line with the Council's latest housing allocations policy. To assist Mr Edge I have copied below an amended version of Policy 4 which has been suggested by our Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. We feel that this aligns with the HAP and together both documents meet the aspirations of our community.

POLICY 4: Housing for the Local Community (Local Lettings)

In order to meet the housing needs of the parish, the plan seeks to ensure that eligible households with a local connection to the parish of Swanton Morley are given preference in perpetuity on new affordable housing for rent on the sites LP(098)014 and LP(098)016, being sites allocated by the Neighbourhood Plan over and above those already allocated by the local authority.

A local connection is defined by one or more of the following;

- Households containing one or more individuals who have resided within Swanton Morley parish for the last three years
- Households who need to move to Swanton Morley Parish to give or receive support from or to a close family or relatives who are residents of Swanton Morley
- Households where one or more member has been employed within the parish of Swanton Morley for three years
- Former residents of Swanton Morley parish who have lived in the parish for at least three years of the past six years

If at the time of letting there are no eligible household with a local connection, and/or the pool of eligible applicants with a local connection has been exhausted, allocations will be made in accordance with the local housing authority's prevailing housing allocation policy and associated district-wide local connection criteria.

The final percentage and mix of housing types will be determined by the local authority based on housing need in the area and taking into account any other relevant matters such as viability, deliverability and prevailing local and national policy. Matters of eligibility and priority will be determined in accordance with the prevailing housing allocations policy of the local housing authority.

I trust this is of assistance to Mr Edge. His help in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Roger Atterwill
Chairman, Swanton Morley Parish Council