

Fenny Compton – Further Examiner’s Queries

Further to the responses to my enquiries from the Qualifying Body and the Local Authority I have now completed a visit to the Neighbourhood Area and I have a few further queries of the Qualifying Body.

1. The Local Authority update on the SAP will have been noted no doubt. Do you wish to revisit any parts of the text where it has become dated/potentially misleading (albeit the local authority notes that the SAP may be subject to further change)?

2. You ask about the successful use of a Policies Map - here is an example:

www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/1_the_wolds_villages_neighbourhood_plan_referendum_version1/1.%20The%20Wolds%20Villages%20Neighbourhood%20Plan%20Referendum%20Version.pdf

The critical point is that the map should only include for Neighbourhood Plan Policies and not designations made by others eg Conservation Areas, Local Nature Reserves. You will note that the Policies Map can bring together other maps, not necessarily replace them, which allows for suitable scales per subject.

3. You comment "In our view the fact that the areas shown are 'potential' sites following survey by a competent authority, should carry some weight and therefore development on these potential sites should be avoided." Providing the source of the maps will help to establish that they are provided by a "competent authority" and the local authority has identified specific support from Policy CS.6 of the Core Strategy. But the maps are provided, apparently, for information. No explanation of the status "potential" is provided. No connection is made with Policy NA4 which refers more generally to "ecological networks" and references not the Ecological Survey but the Neighbourhood Plan Environmental Survey. I presume that figure 7 provides information upon which the wildlife sites with potential for designation are derived and shown on figure 6, but there is no obvious, direct correlation? And since 2018 has it been expected that 'potential' would be further assessed/progressed? As a representation suggests, the current status of the information needs to be stated clearly, and it will be challenged. As I previously asked, what is the Plan seeking to identify and recognise? Similarly, paragraph 11.7.2 of the Policy refers to "primary hedge lines" but in the absence of mapping or at least a definition then the Policy cannot be implemented (the Preliminary Ecological Report does map hedgerows but, as far as I can see, they use other categorisations). Further clarification please.

4. My reference to "paragraph 3.0.2 notes that "The buildings of Fenny Compton centre are predominantly made of local Hornton Stone"" derived from the Regulation 14 consultation version of the Plan; I'm not sure how I did that but apologies for the confusion.

5. You comment "there is a wealth of evidence of insufficient off-road parking on housing developments built within the last 20 years which demonstrates that existing parking space policies are insufficient". However, I have not been presented with any evidence and my visit, albeit on a weekday, did not provide evidence of a local issue on new housing developments. There is a balance to be struck here with the design expectations of Policy DE1.

6. I note that Figure 9 shows two facilities numbered as "1"; the single mention in the text is to the prominent Church of St. Peter and St. Clare, but the more hidden Methodist Church is not mentioned. Is the map or the text correct?

7. You comment "We would suggest that we reference the most up to date maps used as a part of the recent WCC flood property protection scheme" - what is that reference please?

8. You comment "Our definition of minor commercial is defined in 9.1.1 – i.e. 100m²" but on what basis has it been determined that this is an appropriate scale for "minor"? Without a map I could not readily identify the significance/extent of the location descriptions provided eg Wharf Road. Core Strategy Policy AS.10 supports "conversion", "redevelopment", "small-scale expansion", "extension", "building related to agriculture etc", "farm based business activities", "garden centres and nurseries" and "equestrian-related activities". These seem to relate well to rural locations whereas, as worded, your Policy appears more open, provided the proposal is "minor" and the site is "brownfield"? That gives rise to a potential issue of general conformity.

9. I can see why Policy NA1 might address the vista from high ground to the SE of the village, including views toward the Church. However, views from the High Street toward higher ground are really just glimpses, significantly restricted by buildings and the topography, and the sensitivity of the intermediate ground for development is already addressed by the high-level view. I therefore query whether the blue vista is actually a vista at all. Your comment is invited.

10. My viewing of the proposed Local Green Space prompted me to realise that one of the representations has not been addressed: "Colleagues in Education Services have commented on the reference to the school playing field being designated as green space. The concern is whether this could have an adverse impact on the school's ability to expand or reconfigure accommodation in the future. The freehold of the land I believe will be in WCC ownership although as a Voluntary Controlled School, the buildings will belong to the Trustees of the school. I am unclear whether the Parish Council can designate the land as green space when it isn't in their direct control." Whilst it is clear from the Planning Guidance that the land does not need to be owned or controlled by the Parish Council for designation to occur, the concern that a tightly drawn boundary around the school buildings could inhibit expansion/reconfiguration is a fair question. Similarly I am concerned to know that the owners of the site - apparently two bodies may be involved - have been directly consulted on the proposed designation, as required by Planning Guidance, and what the responses were. Further, I note from my visit that there is no public access to the site; whilst public access is not a requirement for LGS designation, it does limit the recreational value of the land. Lastly, what is the nature of the 'natural flood management' - tree planting? Your further comments are invited.

11. Do the other important 'features' mentioned at paragraph 12.2.3 have an existing heritage asset status?