

Wooler Parish Council: Responses to Examiner's Comments and Regulation 16 Comments on the Submission Draft of Wooler Neighbourhood Plan

8th May 2020

These Comments were discussed at a Zoom meeting of the Wooler Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on 29th April 2020. All members of the Group, which include members of WPC, had the opportunity to comment on the Agreed Comments.

The Comments have been approved by the Chair of WPC, for forwarding to the Examiner.

Examiner's Comments	WNP Response to Examiner's Comments
1. Proposed para. linking to NCC Local Plan discussion of service centres	Agree. Presume this para. to be in section 2., after para 2.1. Omit the sentence about a settlement boundary. We propose no such boundary, nor is one included for Wooler in the NCC Local Plan.
2. Convert Policy 1 into Text	Agree. Then re-order existing Policies 1A and 3 so that 3=1, and 1A=2 (assuming that no need for existing Policy 2)
3. Policy 1A x sustainable drainage solutions	Agree Examiners solution
4. Policy 2: re development in the NP. Remove as not needed	Agree
5. Glossary re major development x consistency with NNP Local Plan	Agree. Keep general definition of major, and add proposed definition of major development in the National Park
6. Policy 3: merge sentences for clarity	Agree
7. Policy 3b: mention Landscape and Visual Assessment	Agree to mention in para 3.17. Does this need to be in the Policy too?
8&9: definition of biodiversity net gain at Policy 3g and in the Glossary	Suggested Change to Policy 3g: That the proposal will achieve a net gain for biodiversity, demonstrated through mitigation, restoration or or compensation measures demonstrated in a measurable way.(add footnote: drafted using CIEEM (2016) <i>Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development</i> page 2, note 1)
10. Housing Numbers: provide an indicative number;	NCC will respond to this question. We have seen and agreed their comments.
11. Policy 4: Not needed, and sites listed in the text	Agree with Examiner's approach
12&13. Include reference to Heritage Impact Statements in texts and Policies 4.1 and 4.3	Agree
14. Policy 4.3	Leave policy wording as it is. Retain the Policy, as the site is currently levelled, but development has not yet started.
15. Policy 4.5 Status of Mart Field in NCC Local Plan	NCC will provide material to explain the situation

16. Policy 4.5: evidence for our allocation for employment	NCC will provide evidence.
17. Policy 4.6 School Farm Field. Clarification sentence	Agree. Note that some uses already emerging on this site
18. Policy 5: consistency (1/2 bed homes v. 1/2/3 bed homes)	Para 3.64 refers to the findings from our survey, and reflects older people seeking to downsize (and a few stuck with the bedroom tax). Our concern is also to provide for and attract younger families. This is what led to the statement in the Policy. A paragraph to explain this as follows could be added to the text: "In order for young families, both those already in the area and who may move to the area, the Plan also seeks to enable the provision of further affordable and modestly priced 2 and 3 bed dwellings".
19: Accept NCC proposed revisions to Policy 5	(a) Agree to accept wording changes, except with respect to 5c. This should be rephrased to refer to a 'limited number of dwellings', as in proposed changes to Policy 9. (b) We have argued that 15% is a minimum for a place like Wooler and that the need for affordable housing, continually reinforced by a number of recent surveys, indicates that need could be higher. We have indicated what needs to be done if a higher percentage is sought. We do not see how this would affect viability, unless the evidence required came forward. Then this could be discussed. We would like therefore to retain the wording of Policy 5 with respect to this point. .
20. Policy 6f: Approved parking standards or needs of occupiers	Agree
21. Policy 7: Compatibility with NPPF paras 71 and 77, and relevance given NCC LP Policy HOU7	NCC advises we should keep this Policy, as NLP may not be 'made' for some time. Note that this Policy does not just refer to 'rural exception' sites.
22: Policy 9: para 3.59 to say a 'limited number of dwellings'	Agree
23&24. Policy 10: Reduce repetition of the NPPF and clarify Policy	Agree
25&26. Policy 11: Industrial Site extensions and range of uses	Agree with whatever is the appropriate listing of permitted uses. Small scale extensions are enabled by our other policies.
27, 28 & 29: Policy 12: 'within and on the edge of Wooler' and Textual changes	Agree
30 & 31: Policy 13. Wooler Town Centre: definition of, mapping of – specific area or frontages	Agree to use of term 'Main shopping streets of Wooler Town'. Retain the 'frontages' treatment. With regard to the reference to 'in this area' referring to upper floors, replace with "along these frontages".

32 & 33: Policy 15: Overnight tourist facilities and static caravans	Agree to removal of static caravans from the Policy. Prepared to accept Examiner's amendments to Policy 15d, or any other amendment which would satisfy the National Park. The issue for us all is one of scale!
34 Policy 17 Definition of smallscale renewable energy developments	Agree definition of scale discovered by NCC
35 Policy 18: New build of just changes of use?	Both!
36 & 37: Policy 19: Footways, accessibility to Town Centre and deletions to avoid overlap	Agree deletion of final two paras of Policy 19, as net gain for biodiversity covered elsewhere Clarification requested: There are footways all the way along the east side of the A697, and to just beyond the crossroads half way along. There is also a footpath from the westside of the A697 up to Church Street past the Old Mill and just below the Tower. Our primary concern is get a ped. Crossing over the 697.
38. Policy 23: Delete reference to the Football Ground.	Agree to delete reference to WFG in the Policy Agree to deletion of 'yellow' square at on the site 4.2, but retain text.
39: Policy 24 re Community facilities. Locate on map	Agree
40: Policy 25: responding to NCC comments	Agree
41: Glossary definition of Wooler Town	Agree

Responses to Regulation 16 Comments

Highways England: No comments

Environment Agency: re Flood Risk Assessment for Policy 4.3 (Fergusons/Redpaths Yard). Examiner has made no comment. Does Examiner think this is OK?

Historic England: No further comments

Northumberland National Park: Comments re Policy 2, 12, 14 addressed in the above Table of responses; Policy 21 in the Table below re NCC suggestions; others not seen as needing change by Examiner.

- red boundaries around Policy 4 sites would be nice – if this can be done easily!

National Grid: sent standard letter

Coal Authority: No comments

Natural England: Two main comments (re SUDS, and net biodiversity gain) dealt with in the above Table of responses.

Northumberland County Council:

Most are dealt with in the above

Comment:	Response
Helpful edits	Agree renumbering of paras as no para 3.19; accept change from 'five' to 'six' in para 3.24;
Several further comments on Policy 6	Examiner sees no need to change and nor do we, except: 6c: add ' mobility vehicles and buggies ', cut 'etc'
Policy 8: suggested text changes	Agree
Policy 14: suggested wording changes	No need to change
Policy 20 & 21:	Agree to minor changes in Policy 20 suggested by NCC No change suggested for Policy 21
Policy 26: NCC wants the second para re contributions deleted. Examiner hasn't supported this.	No change