

# Benson Parish Neighbourhood Plan

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## Initial Comments and Questions from the Independent Examiner

**Prepared by**

**JOHN SLATER BA(Hons), DMS, MRTPI**

**John Slater Planning Ltd**

**4<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

## Introduction

1. As you will be aware I have been appointed to carry out the examination of the Benson Parish Neighbourhood Plan. I have carried out my initial review of the Plan and the accompanying documents and I am about to start drafting my report. I have already carried out a visit to the area on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018.
2. My view is that I should be able to deal with the examination of this Plan by the consideration of the written material alone, but I do reserve the right to call for a public hearing, if I consider that it will assist my examination. There are a number of questions that I have arisen during my consideration of the Plan, upon which I would appreciate the comments from a number of identified bodies, including South Oxfordshire District Council and Benson Parish Council plus a number of parties who have submitted representations at Regulation 16 stage.

## Questions for the Qualifying Body

3. The LPA has suggested that the period of the plan should run from 2011-33 rather than 2018-33. Does the Parish Council have any views on whether I should recommend this change?
4. It has been suggested that the Plan should have a Proposal Map which should include all the allocation sites, along with the route of the road shown on the Plan. Could a Proposals Map be provided? I note that there are now planning applications submitted on all 3 allocation sites. Is it possible to have a composite plan showing all the proposed layouts, which could demonstrate how the individual elements relate together?
5. Is the Parish Council proposing to use its share of the 25% CIL payment to fund the completion of the road and / or other infrastructure identified in the plan, including the extension to the doctor's surgery?
6. What is the Qualifying Body's expectation of how access would be provided to site BEN3/4, if the roundabout to be built with the site of BEN2 were not implemented immediately? Or if BEN2 is developed but the final link to allow for the connection to the A4074/ B4009, is not physically provided, as the requirement is only that the land is safeguarded? Will its traffic have to use the roads through the centre of the village?
7. Should I be recommending the allocation of housing numbers to each of the allocation sites, in which case what numbers should I be considering, and should these be *minimum* numbers/ *approximate* numbers or *maximum* figures?
8. Policy NP9 is proposing *minimum* car parking standards. The policy refers to National Guidelines- can I be advised where to look for these national guidelines. The County Parking Guidelines are maximum provisions. Where

is the evidence that car ownership is different in Benson to the rest of the county which would justify a different car parking standard?

9. How will the burial ground proposals set out in Policy NP5 be delivered, when the landowners, Gladman Developments, in their Reg 16 representations, have stated that they have no intention of releasing their land for that purpose?

### **Question for the Qualifying Body and the developers of sites BEN 1, BEN2 and BEN3/4**

10. I note that planning permission has now been granted for the site BEN1 covered by Policy NP2 and this is acknowledged by the Plan. The Section 106 refers to the land for the new road and its connection to the A4074/ or B4009 being safeguarded. Can the QB and the developers of all the allocated residential sites, provide me with any updated information as to how the discussions, which are mentioned in the Plan documentation (which I believe, was prepared in October 2017), are progressing. I am particularly interested in what agreement has been reached with regards to the *implementation* of the road, rather than just the *safeguarding* of the route. Is there any expectation on behalf of the housebuilders or land owners of funding being provided by Oxfordshire County Council or from South Oxfordshire District Council? Is there yet an agreed timetable for the comprehensive delivery of the road and agreement as to the overall division of costs and an agreed timetable. Would it be possible for me to be provided with minutes of these meetings?
11. Is there agreement as to an agreed specification for the proposed Road?
12. Will the roundabout for sites BEN 2 and BEN3/4 be provided before either one of these sites are developed or will BEN 3/4 be capable of being accessed from the B4009 only, and would that scenario allow for housing completions on that site over the 50% proposed in Policy NP4?

### **Question for the LPA**

13. Policies in the plan refer to CIL payments being made to the capital costs of the Doctor's surgery expansion. Can the District Council set out how decisions are made by the District Council as to the allocation of CIL receipts in terms of meeting the infrastructure needs identified in the neighbourhood plan? Is the CIL money generated in a locality ring fenced to that area or is it pooled to allow more strategic spending across the district?

### **Question for Gladman Developments Limited**

14. In your Regulation 16 representation, it is stated that Gladman Developments are currently seeking a resolution to the noise issue which lead to the

dismissal of the appeal. If I were to consider a residential allocation of that land, can you give me any indication as to the likely solutions or possible strategies that would allow the noise issues to be overcome so as to create an acceptable residential environment?

### **Question for Carter Jonas**

15. In your letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018, it states in paragraph 1.3, that the “inclusion of the “Relief Road” in the BNP is a strategic matter and beyond the scope of a neighbourhood plan, because it is required to address the demands of development beyond that identified in the BNP”. Can you point me to the Secretary of State guidance or policy that states that a neighbourhood plan cannot choose to address matters that may arise or have implications, beyond the immediate impact of the development, promoted in the plan.

### **Question for the Qualifying Body, LPA and Berrick Salome Parish Council**

16. I have received representations that if I am minded to recommend the plan goes forward to referendum, that the area for the referendum should extend beyond the boundary of Benson Parish, so as to include the settlement of Rokemarsh, due to the relative proximity of the development of Site BEN3/4. Do any of the above parties, have any views on whether the referendum area should be extended to include all or parts of Rokemarsh and if so could the area within Berrick Salome Parish suggested for inclusion, be shown on a map? This would assist me in making an appropriate and workable recommendation.

### **Concluding Comments**

17. I require all the responses to these questions to be submitted to me via the Neighbourhood Plan team at South Oxfordshire District Council within the next 21 days i.e. by noon on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018 to allow me to conclude my examination report expeditiously.

18. I would be grateful if this note and all the responses could be placed on South Oxfordshire District Council's and the Benson Neighbourhood Plan's, respective websites.

John Slater BA(Hons), DMS, MRTPI

Independent Examiner

John Slater Planning Ltd

4<sup>th</sup> February 2018