

# Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan 2018 - 2033

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## Further Comments of the Independent Examiner

**Prepared by**

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## Introduction

1. As you will be aware I have been appointed to carry out the examination of the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan. On 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018, I submitted a document entitled Initial Comments of the Independent Examiner seeking clarification on a number of matters and I am grateful for the comments received from both the District Council and the Parish Council.
2. I have been proceeding with the drafting of my report and I had hoped to have been able to issue a report next week. However, I became aware yesterday, through an online article in Planning Resources, that Tandridge District Council has agreed to shortly submit its Local Plan to the Secretary of State. Could I be advised whether it has now been submitted. I have reviewed the Planning Officer's report that was presented to Tandridge's Planning Policy Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2018. This highlights the fact that the local plan version for submission, will be including a housing figure which is less than the districts Objectively Assessed Need(OAN).
3. This, as the Officer's report points out, will be a matter which the Local Plan Inspector will have to address and no doubt will be the focus of discussion at the Local Plan Examination. It is not a matter that necessarily is central to my examination of the Limpsfield Neighbourhood Plan, but it could have implications for my consideration of the question of Local Green Space (LGS) and in particular site, LGS2 Glebe Field. As parties will be aware this has been the subject of objections at Regulation 16 stage, on behalf of the Diocese of Southwark.

## Local Green Space

4. I have come to an initial conclusion, that two linked sites, LG1 Brook Field and LGS3 Glebe Meadow are both capable of designation as LGS. The Brook Field is not available for development and I am satisfied that the Glebe Field has a more formal recreational role that means it is important for the community.
5. My overall impression is that the adjacent Glebe Fields also meets the specific tests set out in paragraphs 76 and 77 of the NPPF (2012) and I am satisfied that the site is "demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance".
6. However, my conclusions on LGS designation must also have regard to whether the plan meets the requirement, set out in Para 76, namely that "Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and compliment investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services".
7. I recognise that the Submission Version of the local plan is not seeking to allocate any residential land in Limpsfield Parish. However, the Officer's Report acknowledges that if the Local Plan Inspector does not accept the

Council's arguments put forward for not meeting the OAN, then additional sites may need to be found.

8. It strikes me that the Glebe Fields site is within the settlement boundary and hence does not require development encroaching in the Green Belt and it is a location where residents would be able to use the town centre without the need for a car, and also it is within walking distance of Oxted Railway Station. As such it could be argued that its location is more sustainable than other possible housing sites that may have to be considered. The difficulty is that if the land is designated as LGS, then the opportunities for residential development within the settlement boundary, will be lost for the period of the Local Plan.
9. The dilemma I face is, whilst there is undoubtedly clear public support for designation, the Local Plan Inspector may require the District Council to seek to find additional housing sites and Glebe Fields, which may be attractive in terms of its location, would be ruled out on the basis of its LGS designation. Hence it could be argued, that the LGS designation, under the particular circumstances, where the shortfall in the emerging Local Plan meeting its OAN, would be inconsistent "with the local planning of sustainable development". That conclusion only arises if the Local Planning Inspector does not accept the District Council's arguments on the constraints of the AONB and Green Belt which prevent it meeting its requirement for new homes.
10. I have given some thought as to whether the land could be given some temporary protection until the position regarding the Local Plan and the housing figures, has been resolved. If the land is not required, as part of the Local Plan, or is not found to be a preferred location, then it would be possible to confer LGS status at that stage, possibly through a review of the neighbourhood plan. Alternatively, I could just recommend that the land is not designated as LGS but I am trying to reconcile the public support for LGS designation, with an uncertain housing supply situation.
11. I am therefore inviting comments or representations on this question, from Tandridge District Council, Limpsfield Parish Council and the agents on behalf of the landowners, on the question of whether the identification of Glebe Fields as LGS could be inconsistent with the local planning of sustainable development, in view of the fact that this land is within the settlement boundary, is not in the Green Belt and is available for development and the emerging local plan is not proposing to meet Objective Assessed Need.

## Policy LNP2

12. This is a matter that I have picked up in my report, but in view of the fact that I am seeking further representations on the topic of Glebe Fields, I am taking the opportunity of seeking the views of both the Parish Council and the District Council on a further matter.

13. The substantive wording of Policy LNP2 is almost identical to that set out in Policy DP8 of the Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies. Therefore, that current policy already protects the built-up areas within Limpsfield Parish. Could the Parish Council explain what is the rationale for duplicating the policy in the Neighbourhood Plan.
14. Furthermore, it appears that the new local plan does not carry that policy forward in the same form i.e. a policy specifically dealing with Residential Garden Land Development and it appears to place greater emphasis on making efficient use of land, in line with national advice, as set out in the proposed Policy TLP 19: Housing Densities and the Best Use of Land. Could the Parish Council and the District Council offer a view as to whether it considers that the provisions of Policy LNP2 would be in conflict with Policy TLP 19, if that policy were to be adopted. I have regard to whether the provisions of Section 38 (3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 would apply, if the local plan were adopted after the neighbourhood plan is made.

## Final Matters

15. I would ask that responses to these two matters could be coordinated by Nicola Walters from the District Council. I am copying this note to the Parish Council and the LPA, and I would ask that Tandridge forward this note to the agents for the Diocese of Southwark. I would be pleased to receive any comments by 5pm on **Friday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2019**.
16. Please can parties place a copy of this document and the respective responses on the District Council's and the Parish Council's respective websites.