



**North
Northamptonshire
Council**

RINGSTEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DECISION STATEMENT

Regulation 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

Summary

Following an independent examination, North Northamptonshire Council confirms that the Ringstead Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan), as revised by the modifications set out in Table 1 below, complies with the Basic Conditions and legal requirements, and can therefore proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum. This Decision Statement and Examiner's Report will be available on North Northamptonshire Council's website and Ringstead Parish Council's website. A paper copy will be deposited at relevant Council offices and libraries for inspection during opening hours.

Background

Under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and the Localism Act 2011, Ringstead Parish Council have prepared a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish of Ringstead, with the help of the local community. The Plan area, which comprises the whole of Ringstead parish, was designated by East Northamptonshire Council (now subsumed in North Northamptonshire Council) on 4th December 2017.

The Plan has been subject to two periods of statutory public consultation. The second of these consultations was organised by North Northamptonshire Council inviting representations on the Plan in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), during a six-week period closing on 28 June 2021.

Independent Examination

North Northamptonshire Council appointed Christopher Collison of Planning & Management Limited, with the consent of Ringstead Parish Council, to undertake the examination of the Plan and to prepare a report of the independent examination. The examiner determined that the Examination could be undertaken without the need for a public hearing.

The Examiner's Report was issued on 28 February 2022. The examiner concludes that, subject to recommended modifications, the Plan meets all the Statutory Requirements set out in paragraph 8(1) of schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and meets the Basic Conditions.

Decision and Reasons

Having considered each of the recommendations made by the Examiner's Report and the reasons for them, in consultation with the Parish Council, North Northamptonshire Council has decided to accept the modifications to the draft plan as detailed in Table 1 below. North Northamptonshire Council is satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan, as modified, complies with legal requirements and can proceed to referendum.

The Examiner recommended that there is no need for the referendum boundary to extend beyond the designated neighbourhood area. The Council agrees with this recommendation and concludes that any referendum that takes place in due course be contiguous with the boundary of the designated Plan area.

In line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 it is therefore proposed to hold a referendum to determine whether the Plan should be incorporated into the development plan for North Northamptonshire. The following question will be posed at the referendum, in line with the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations 2012 (as amended):

"Do you want North Northamptonshire Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Ringstead to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

The date for the referendum and further details will be published once a date is set by the Council. This is currently being discussed with colleagues in Electoral Services.

Signed:



George Candler
Executive Director of Place and Economy

Dated:
March 2022

Table 1				
Recommended Modification Number	Examiners Report Reference	Ringstead Neighbourhood Plan Reference	Proposed Modification	North Northamptonshire Council Decision/Reasoning
1	Page 6	Introduction and Whole Plan	<p><u>Recommended modification 1:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - update paragraph 1.3 in the Introduction of the Neighbourhood Plan to explain that in April 2021 North Northamptonshire was formed replacing East Northamptonshire council and other Councils. - throughout the Neighbourhood Plan, update references to actions or decisions taken or intended by East Northamptonshire Council after April 2021 to refer to North Northamptonshire Council. 	Agree that for clarity and the avoidance of doubt an explanation should be provided in the introduction to the Neighbourhood Plan to explain that North Northamptonshire Council replaced East Northamptonshire Council and other Councils from 1 st April 2021.
2	Page 35	Policy R1 Features of Local Heritage Interest	<p><u>Recommended modification 2:</u></p> <p>In Policy R1 replace “<i>balance the need for, or public benefit of the proposed development against</i>” with “<u>have regard for</u>”</p> <p><i>“The policy wording refers to public benefit. Whilst this is a matter referred to in paragraph 201 of the Framework in respect of proposals affecting designated heritage assets it is not a matter</i></p>	Accept modification and agree that as stated in the Examiner’s Report, as modified, that as per the Framework where consideration to be given in respect of proposals affecting designated heritage assets is not a matter to be considered with respect to non-designated heritage assets

			<i>to be considered with respect to non-designated heritage assets.”</i>	
3	Page 36	Policy R2 Design	<p><u>Recommended modification 3:</u></p> <p>Policy R2 replace wording with: <u>“Development that reflects local distinctive and traditional character will be supported.”</u></p> <p><i>“The term “of Ringstead” introduces uncertainty as it is unclear whether reference is made to the village or the parish, and is unnecessary as all of the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan apply throughout the Neighbourhood Area unless a smaller area is specified.”</i></p>	Agree to modifications of this policy and that for clarity and the avoidance of doubt this wording should be modified.
4	Page 37	Policy R3 Eco Design	<p><u>Recommended modification 4:</u></p> <p>Policy R3 replace: <i>“Where possible development proposals should”</i> with <u>“Development proposals that”</u>, also after “points” add <u>“will be supported.”</u></p> <p><i>“Although including the term “where possible”, which itself</i></p>	Agree to modifications of this policy, as Examiner’s Report States, the wording of the Policy would itself introduce uncertainty.

			<i>introduces uncertainty, Policy R3 is seeking to establish requirements. The policy does not meet the basic conditions.”</i>	
5	Page 40	Policy R4: Local Green Spaces	<p><u>Recommended modification 5:</u></p> <p>Policy R4 after “following sites” insert: “(identified on Map 4 and the Policies Maps)”; replace the text after “Allotments” with “<u>Management of development within Local Green Spaces will be consistent with national policies for managing development within Green Belt.</u>”</p>	<p>Agreed. As stated in Examiner’s Report –national policy is explicit in respect of requiring policies for managing development within a Local Green Space to be consistent with those for Green Belts.</p> <p>The Council accepts Modifications in the interest of clarity.</p>
6	Page 41	Policy R6: Village Hall	<p><u>Recommended modification 6:</u></p> <p>Policy R6 (B) replace “for all” with “<u>that serve local community needs</u>”</p> <p><i>“The requirement that a new village hall must incorporate services and facilities “for all” is imprecise. I have recommended a modification in this respect so</i></p>	<p>Agreed. Modification to the Policy so that it is “is clearly written and unambiguous, as stated in Examiner’s Report is supported.</p>

			<i>that the policy “is clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals” as required by paragraph 16d) of the Framework.”</i>	
7	Page 42	Policy R7: Infrastructure	<p><u>Recommended modification 7:</u></p> <p>Policy R7 replace the text before “A” with <u>“Any locally determined element of developer contributions will be utilised for new or improved infrastructure relating to the following:”</u> and delete the final paragraph.</p> <p><i>“The policy is reliant on third party organisations for its implementation, which it may not be. The opening statement of the policy and the final sentence are imprecise. The use of the term “where appropriate” introduces uncertainty.”</i></p>	Agree with Examiner’s view that in summary - the text is imprecise and could place an obstacle in the way of essential infrastructure. His recommendation is consistent with the fact that national and local planning policy provides for necessary infrastructure.
8	Page 43	Policy R8: Parking	<p><u>Recommended modification 8:</u></p> <p>Policy R8 insert comma after “availability of”</p>	Accept modification and agree that the changes support the aim of clarity and avoidance of doubt.

			<p><i>"I have recommended a modification in respect of the second sentence so that the policy "is clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals" as required by paragraph 16d) of the Framework."</i></p>	
9	Page 45	Policy R9: The Countryside	<p><u>Recommended modification 9:</u></p> <p>Policy R9 – replace “<i>Village</i>” with “<u>Settlement</u>” and Replace bullet points A to J inclusive with: “</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. <u>Development by statutory undertakers or public utility providers that must be located within a countryside location;</u> B. <u>Subdivision of an existing dwelling;</u> C. <u>Minor extensions that are subordinate in scale and appearance to existing buildings;</u> D. <u>Proposals for development of strictly limited types that meet the national and</u> 	<p>Agreed – as per Examiner’s recommendation that Policy R9 should not be interpreted as seeking to constrain any strategic allocation.</p>

			<p><u>strategic planning policy defined criteria for appropriate development within the countryside; and</u></p> <p>E. <u>Strategic locations.</u></p> <p>On the index to Map 7 insert <u>“Ringstead”</u> before “Settlement”</p> <p><i>“I have considered the implications of the Ringstead Settlement Boundary and its alignment in terms of housing supply meeting local needs when considering Policy R16 later in my report. I have however recommended Policy R9 should not be interpreted as seeking to constrain any strategic allocation, which it may not.”</i></p>	
10	Page 49	Policy R12: Public Rights of Way Network	<p><u>Recommended modification 10:</u></p> <p>Policy R12 replace “<i>the rights</i>” with “<u>public Rights</u>”; replace “<i>encouraged</i>” with “<u>supported</u>”</p> <p><i>“I have recommended a modification to clarify the policy relates to public rights of way.”</i></p>	Accept modification and agree that the changes to clarify the policy for the avoidance of doubt.

11	Page 50	Policy R13: SPA Mitigation Strategy	<p><u>Recommended modification 11:</u></p> <p>Policy R13 continue the first paragraph with “<u>or later update of the SPD</u>”;</p> <p>replace the second paragraph with “<u>Consultation with Natural England on residential development proposals may identify a requirement for mitigation measures beyond simply a payment. In such circumstances, and in the case of other types of development potentially resulting in loss of functionally linked habitat to the Upper Nene Valley SPA, a project level Appropriate Assessment will be required to accompany any planning application.</u>”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modify supporting text to state that there is work ongoing to update the SPA Mitigation Strategy and SPA SPD and there will be a need to apply this as appropriate as the 	Agreed. With the suggested modifications, the policy serves a clear purpose by providing an additional level of detail or distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policies
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			<p>Neighbourhood Plan is implemented.</p> <p><i>“Earlier in my report I have considered the issue of Habitat Regulations Assessment and in particular the Regulation 16 representation of Natural England. I have recommended a modification of Policy R13 in accordance with the conclusions I reached earlier in my report. The policy is in general conformity with the strategic policies included in the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 applying in the Neighbourhood Area and relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan, in particular Policies 4, 19, and 20. The policy serves a clear purpose by providing an additional level of detail or distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policies.”</i></p>	
12	Page 52	Policy R14: Ecology and Biodiversity	<p><u>Recommended modification 12:</u></p> <p>Policy R14 delete “<i>which include</i>”</p>	Accept modification and agree that the changes support the aim of clarity and avoidance of doubt.

			<p><i>The term “which include” introduces uncertainty and results in the policy not providing a basis for the determination of development proposals.</i></p>	
13	Page 54	Policy R15: Trees and Hedges	<p><u>Recommended modification 13:</u></p> <p>Policy R15 replace with: <u>“To be supported development proposals that will result in the unavoidable loss of trees or hedgerows must include replacement planting of native species in locations where they would have the opportunity to grow to maturity, increase canopy cover and contribute to the local ecosystem and the appearance of the area.”</u></p> <p><i>“This policy seeks to establish that planning applications affecting trees and hedgerows should be accompanied by a tree survey establishing specified matters. The policy also seeks to establish an approach to development proposals affecting trees and hedgerows... The</i></p>	<p>Accept modification and agree that planning applications affecting trees and hedgerows should be accompanied by a tree survey so that the policy has sufficient regard for national policy.</p>

			<p><i>policy is seeking to establish information requirements that are outside the statutory framework relating to local lists of information to be submitted in support of planning applications. I have recommended a modification in this respect so that the policy has sufficient regard for national policy.”</i></p>	
14	Page 64	Policy R16: Providing for Housing	<p><u>Recommended modification 14:</u></p> <p>Policy R16 delete the second paragraph including parts A to D</p> <p><i>“I am satisfied that in preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan consideration has been given to opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites suitable for housing in the Neighbourhood Area in accordance with paragraph 69 of the Framework. Future strategic policies including any allocations in the emerging Part 2 Local Plan may provide for further residential development.”</i></p>	Accept modification and agree to the deletion of second paragraph.

15	Page 66	Policy R17 Land at Dodson and Horrell	<p><u>Recommended modification 15:</u></p> <p>Policy R17 - in part E a) after “value” insert “<u>unless this is demonstrated not to be viable or practicable</u>”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In part F replace “<i>the distinctive and traditional character of Ringstead in accordance with Policy R2</i>” with “<u>distinctive and traditional local character</u>” - Delete part G and after the list of criteria insert a separate sentence “<u>Development schemes that incorporate integrated renewable energy technologies, rainwater harvesting, water efficiency measures and integrated vehicle electric charging points will be supported.</u>” - Insert an additional criterion after criteria H stating “<u>Development proposals must demonstrate to the satisfaction of Natural England that they present an adequate solution to</u> 	<p>Agree to modifications and support the clarification that the housing allocation lies within the Ringstead Settlement Boundary/ modification of Maps 7 and Policies Map to demonstrate this.</p>
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			<p><u>mitigate the effects of development on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA prior to any grant of planning permission.</u></p> <p>Revise Map 7 and the Policies Map so that the Ringstead Settlement Boundary is more clearly defined in the vicinity of the housing allocation.</p> <p>Re-designate the criteria in accordance with the deletion and insertion.</p>	
16	Page 69	Policy R20: Housing Mix	<p><u>Recommended modification 16:</u></p> <p>Policy R20 – continue this policy with “<u>unless the latest assessment of local housing needs confirms these are not required</u>”</p> <p><i>In “consideration the comments of the North Northamptonshire Council Strategic Housing Service” which “states the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed</i></p>	Agree to modification so that that the policy remains relevant throughout the plan period, should local housing needs change.

			<p><i>and reflected in planning policies.” Therefore “I have recommended a modification so that the policy remains relevant throughout the plan period should local housing needs change.”</i></p>	
17	Page 70	R21: Affordable Housing	<p><u>Recommended modification 17:</u></p> <p>Policy R21 – commence the policy with “<u>In legal and other agreements connected to planning consents</u>”</p> <p>- Delete “<i>in Ringstead</i>”</p> <p>Commencing the policy with: “<i>In legal and other agreements connected to planning consents... will be the mechanism to control allocation</i>”</p> <p>The term “<i>in Ringstead</i>” introduces uncertainty and is unnecessary as all the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan apply throughout the Neighbourhood Area unless a smaller area is specified.</p>	Accept modifications and agree that the changes support the aim of clarity in this policy.

18	Page 74	Policy R22: Gypsies and Travellers	<p><u>Recommended modification 18:</u></p> <p>Delete Policy R22</p> <p><i>“Core Strategy Policy 31 requires local planning authorities to protect existing lawful sites, plots and pitches for gypsies and travellers.”</i></p> <p><i>“These matters have not, and cannot, satisfactorily be addressed at a neighbourhood level and indeed Core Strategy Policy 31 requires the necessity for further site allocations to be addressed in Part 2 Local Plans.”</i></p>	Agreed, the protection of lawful sites will be addressed in the emerging Local Plan Part 2.
Annex: Minor corrections to the Neighbourhood Plan:	Page 77	Whole Plan	<p><u>Recommended modification 19:</u></p> <p>Modify policy explanation sections, general text, figures and images to achieve consistency with the modified policies, and to correct identified errors.</p>	Agree these small text changes are necessary where points have been overtaken by subsequent events. Other changes and deletions support the aim of clarity and avoidance of doubt.

