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INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE ALDERLEY EDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EXAMINER: Andrew Seaman BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

Anne Ross
Clerk to Alderley Edge Parish Council

Tom Evans
Cheshire East Council

Examination Ref: 01/AS/AENP

23 November 2020

Dear Ms Ross and Mr Evans

ALDERLEY EDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMINATION

Following the submission of the Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) for examination, I would like to clarify some initial procedural matters.

1. Examination Documentation

I can confirm that I am satisfied that I have received a complete submission of the draft Plan and accompanying documentation, including the Basic Conditions Statement, the Consultation Statement, the SEA Screening Report and the Regulation 16 representations, to enable me to undertake the examination.

Subject to my further detailed assessment of the draft Plan, I have not at this initial stage identified any very significant and obvious flaws in the Plan that might lead me to advise that the examination should not proceed.

2. Site Visit

I will aim to carry out a site visit to the neighbourhood plan area in the week beginning 30 November 2020, subject to the prevailing government COVID-19 advice at that time. The site visit will assist in my assessment of the draft Plan, including the issues identified in the representations.

The visit will be undertaken unaccompanied. It is very important that I am not approached to discuss any aspects of the Plan or the neighbourhood area, as this may be perceived to prejudice my independence and risk compromising the fairness of the examination process (and further respecting the current COVID-19 distancing arrangements).

3. Written Representations

At this stage, I consider the examination can be conducted solely by the written representations procedure, without the need for a hearing. However, I will reserve the option to convene a hearing should a matter(s) come to light where I consider that a hearing is necessary to ensure the adequate examination of an issue, or to ensure that a person has a fair chance to put a case.

4. Further Clarification

I have some initial questions seeking further clarification from the Parish Council, which I have set out in the Annex to this letter. I would be grateful if you can seek to provide a written response as soon as possible and within **10 days** from the date of this letter. I may have additional questions, following my site visit, which I will set out in writing should I require any further clarification.

5. Examination Timetable

As you will be aware, the intention is to examine the Plan (including conduct of the site visit) with a view to providing a draft report (for 'fact checking') within 4-6 weeks of submission of the draft Plan. However, in view of the additional information which I have requested I must provide the opportunity for you to reply. Consequentially, the examination timetable will need to be extended. Please be assured that I will seek to mitigate any delay as far as is practicable. The IPe office team will keep you updated on the delivery date of the draft report.

If you have any process questions related to the conduct of the examination, which you would like me to address, please do not hesitate to contact the office team in the first instance.

In the interests of transparency, may I prevail upon you to ensure a copy of this letter and any responses to my questions, are placed on the Parish Council and Local Authority websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Your sincerely

Andrew Seaman

Examiner

Annex

From my initial reading of the Alderley Edge Neighbourhood Plan and the supporting evidence, I have the following preliminary questions for the Parish Council. I have requested the submission of responses within **ten days** of receipt of this letter.

The Alderley Edge Parish Council Responses to each question are provided in blue text below. These have been prepared in consultation with members of the AENDP Steering Group and with support from officers at Cheshire East Council (CEC), where appropriate.

1. As identified by the consultation comments of Cheshire East Council, the Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Plan Document has been published for consultation prior to its intended submission for Examination. How does the Parish Council intend to update and reflect any changes arising which have currently rendered references within the Neighbourhood Plan out of date, including Map 3 and paragraph 6.13?

Alderley Edge Parish Council Response:

The Parish Council is happy to update references to the SADPD in the AENDP to refer to the latest version. The Revised Publication Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (Track Changes Version) was published for consultation in September 2020 and the former proposed site allocations for housing in Alderley Edge have been deleted. Most of the AENDP policies are stand-alone policies and do not refer to the former site allocations, although Policy AE16 refers to 'land within a proposed new housing site' - see response to QAE16 below.

The following sections of supporting text refer to the SADPD and should be updated in the AENDP:

P6 second para
P10 1.6 and p11 1.7
P21 5.8 - refer to amended Policy PG8 and supporting text
P22 5.13 - update
P25 6.10 - update
P26 6.13 - refer to amended Policy PG8 and supporting text
P27 Map 3 - delete and CEC to provide new map if available
P29 6.17
P30 6.22
P31 6.24
P35 6.29
P43 7.8 - update and refer to new Policy PG8
P86 9.34 and Policy AE16 - please refer to response to Q7 below.

There may also be other text identified by the Examiner.

Following discussions with officers at CEC, it is possible that the final SADPD will not be adopted until 2022 with some further changes to the Plan. However, this is not likely to include residential site allocations at Alderley Edge. Upon direction of the examiner, relevant references that link to the SADPD could be deleted throughout the document and if no modification is proposed on this basis, then minor (non material) changes to the supporting text of the AENDP may be undertaken by CEC through a review process to help ensure the AENDP is kept up to date.

2. Could you please supply a map of the current adopted settlement boundary for the village?

Alderley Edge Parish Council Response:

Please see map provided by CEC.

Under saved policies of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan, Alderley Edge does not currently have a specific settlement boundary. The adopted position is that boundary of the settlement is defined by the Green Belt and the mapped extent of the defined land uses removed from it (in this case the 'Predominantly Residential Area'). The line between the Predominantly Residential Area and the Green Belt is effectively the settlement boundary, but for clarity, is not defined as such.

3. In relation to Policy AE8, can you confirm that it is the intention for all of the 'Public Realm' items listed A-E and 'Shop Fronts, Safety and Security' items A-C to be included within proposals in order to be supported? Or only such items as appropriate?

Alderley Edge Parish Council Response:

This Policy aims to promote a range of enhancements to the shopping area, to improve the visitor and shopper experience, and by doing so to support local businesses. It is not intended that a developer should address all the schemes listed, but rather when proposals come forward, they should be encouraged to support the various proposed improvements to the public realm, shop fronts and security where possible and appropriate.

It is suggested that the second sentence of first paragraph of Policy AE8 is amended to:

'Such proposals should include the following wherever possible and appropriate:'

4. The justification for the Local Green Space is noted at Figure 3. Could you clarify if any other evidence is available which supports the designated sites? This will assist me in assessing the suitability of the sites with due regard to national policy. Can you confirm that all landowners have been notified of the proposed Local Green Space designation?

Alderley Edge Parish Council Response:

The list of Local Green Spaces was identified through the AENDP public consultation process and the evidence to support their inclusion is provided in Figure 3. They were widely supported by local residents in public consultations (for instance 93.84% of residents supported the proposed Local Green Spaces in the 2019 informal consultation on the emerging Draft Plan).

The Parish Council considers that as a group, the proposed Local Green Spaces make an important contribution to the unique character of Alderley Edge. They contribute to the 'greenness' of the village, and soften the built environment with attractive areas of grass, shrubs and mature trees. They form an intrinsic part of Alderley Edge's special character and if they are lost to road widening schemes or other built form there would be a negative impact on the village's special character.

The landowners of all the Local Green Spaces is CEC except the square in LGS 2 Square in centre of Wood Gardens. It is believed Peaks and Plains Housing Trust may own, or lease LGS 2 Square in centre of Wood Gardens.

CEC and Peaks and Plains Housing Trust were consulted as part of the Reg 14 consultation process. Peaks and Plains Housing Trust did not submit any comments, but CEC expressed some concerns about whether the LGSs met the criteria in the NPPF and in particular whether they were demonstrably special. In response to this, one LGS was deleted (former No. 5 off Ryleys Lane) and further information was added to Figure 3 - the table of justification.

5. Can you confirm that Section 9 of the Plan is complete and that the apparent omission of paragraphs 9.17 and 9.18 is a numbering error?

Alderley Edge Parish Council Response:

Yes - this a numbering error and there is no missing text.

6. Can you confirm if there is a missing map of primary access ways and public rights of way and key sites (paragraph 9.16) or is this Map 11 (page 81)? Paragraph 9.16 refers to Map 10 but Map 10 (page 75) relates to Key Views. Your clarification would be appreciated.

Alderley Edge Parish Council Response:

Yes - this a numbering error. There is no missing map. Para 9.16 should refer to Map 11.

7. Policy AE16 refers to 'a proposed new housing site'. Can you please confirm if this a specific identified site or a generic requirement? Is there any evidence supporting the deliverability of this policy?

Alderley Edge Parish Council Response:

At the time the submission (Reg 15) version of the AENDP was being prepared, the SADPD included several site allocations and at least one developer suggested in their response that the re-provision of open space could be included as part of their proposed development site (see Consultation Statement, Appendix 5, Table 3 - Comments from Landowners and Developers, specifically Story Homes (Ref 1.58)).

However, as site allocations in Alderley Edge are no longer included in Cheshire East Councils Regulation 19 Publication Draft version of the SADPD the Parish Council agrees that paragraph 1 in Policy AE16 should be amended to:

'A small part of the park at Ryleys Lane adjacent to the existing car park as shown on Map 13 is identified for the provision of a new extended public car park, subject to the relocation of the existing small part of public open space to land within a proposed new housing site an accessible location within or adjoining the built up area'.

In addition, paragraph 9.34 should be amended to:

'NDP Draft Policy AE16 supports the extension of the car park at Ryleys Lane, provided that equivalent park land area (approx. 1200m²) can be provided elsewhere in Alderley Edge ~~as part of new housing development proposals~~. Policy AE16 received 92.54% support in the draft consultation held in February 2020.'

Other Matters

Please refer to the comments submitted by Sport England in response to the Regulation 16 consultation, and specifically their concerns about Policy AE19.

The Parish Council would like to advise that they support the changes to the AENDP recommended by Sport England and would ask the Examiner to consider these as part of the recommended changes set out in the Examiner's Report.