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05th May 2017

Ric Cheadle
Buckland Monachorum Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Ric

West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) and Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) joint response to the draft Buckland Monachorum Neighbourhood Plan (Draft 4.5 Dec 2016)

Thank you for sending the pre-submission Buckland Monachorum Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 14) to the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) for our comments. This will be referred to as the Draft NP in this document, which forms the joint response of the two LPAs for the Buckland Monachorum Neighbourhood Plan area, namely West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) and Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA).

The LPAs fully support the initiative for the Neighbourhood Planning Group to produce a neighbourhood plan and recognises that much work has gone into the development of the NP with extensive community involvement. The LPAs commend the Buckland Monachorum Neighbourhood Plan Group for all the hard work already put into the Plan.

These comments have been provided to assist in producing a draft neighbourhood plan for submission to the LPAs (Regulation 15). The response is based on the information provided and available at the time of reviewing the Plan, which includes the pre-submission draft Buckland Monachorum Neighbourhood Plan (Dec 2016) and other consultation documents.

The LPAs have made a number of suggestions for further consideration prior to submission of a Draft Neighbourhood Plan to help ensure the Plan is successful at examination and contributes to a strong planning policy framework for the parish of Buckland Monachorum.

Key comments on the overall NP are:

- 1) This is a good document overall, well written and well researched, showing good understanding of the planning context.
- 2) Understandably, given the timeframe, the Draft NP references previous Development Plan documents rather than the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP). Given that this document is now at pre-submission stage (Regulation 19 consultation) and is likely to be progressed to a similar timeframe as your NP, the recommendation is that you now

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reference solely the JLP in terms of planning policy for the part of your parish that falls within West Devon Borough. This is unlikely to cause you any major problems and you may already have this in hand.

3) There is some concern over:

- a. The lack of clear site allocations for housing. Policy RD1 suggests support for 2 sites, one at Buckland Monachorum and one at Yelverton, but these sites are not properly allocated in the policy, the number of dwellings on each site is not defined, no map of the sites is provided within the main body of the Draft NP, and no criteria are proposed for the sites. This is a missed opportunity to have a greater level of control over development on the identified sites. WDBC is likely to support development of the site at Buckland Monachorum, which accords with Policy TTV30 of the Draft Joint Local Plan. The NP will need to show through further assessment how the Elfordtown site at Yelverton can be developed in accordance with DNPA strategic policy particularly that relating to affordable housing, access and conservation. It is suggested that it may help clarity if policy RD1 is split so there is an individual policy for each site, thereby allowing for more locally derived criteria to be given.
- b. The lack of support for any sites for development at Crapstone. Policy TTV30 in the Draft JLP identifies this settlement as a sustainable location for limited housing development and suggests a number of 10 dwellings to be provided here over the plan period. The Draft NP presents a clear rationale for favouring development at Yelverton over Crapstone, due to the provision of services at the former and lack of them at the latter. However, unless Policy TTV30 is amended in the final adopted JLP to remove Crapstone, development here is likely to come forward anyway and be supported by WDBC. By allocating a site here and providing criteria for development on it, the NP would be able to provide some local control over the process.
- c. The lack of detailed site assessments to support the identified sites. Although the proposed sites have been identified in the respective DNPA and WDBC SHELAA, this should not be relied on to provide adequate assessment of the sites and the possible alternatives. Given the location within the AONB, any assessment of sites for over 10 dwellings should cover the exception tests as set out in Paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The SEA work that we have already advised the need for will to some extent cover this requirement, but the recommendation is that in addition you provide site assessments based on the guidance available at <http://mycommunity.org.uk/resources/site-assessment-for-neighbourhood-plans/>
- d. The lack of any Local Green Space designation. While green space is referenced in the Draft NP, there is a missed opportunity to protect particular green spaces that are demonstrably special to the local community, in accordance with Paragraphs 76 - 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Guidance on this topic is available from the Neighbourhood Planning team (SW-Neighbourhood Planning neighbourhood.planning@swdevon.gov.uk) on request, and at <http://mycommunity.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-planning-local-green-spaces/>

- e. WDBC would prefer to see a more proactive approach to affordable housing provision. A Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) has been undertaken and the Draft NP relies on existing commitments to fulfil the identified need. However, an HNA is essentially a snapshot in time and cannot predict affordable housing need in the parish for the lifetime of the NP. The recommendation is that affordable housing need is reconsidered in the light of this and the targets for affordable housing provision set out in JLP policy Dev8, and further provision made if appropriate, by identifying a suitable site and making provision for it to come forward should an up-to-date HNA identify a need for it. A commitment to update the HNA every five years could usefully be included in supporting text. You may do well to consider Community Led Housing: please contact us for more information on this. This is particularly important given that the provision of affordable housing for young people is identified as a key issue for the NP, which ties in with your strategic aims especially SA3 and SA8.

More detailed comments have been given in the table below.

Comments on specific parts of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan

Paragraph, Section or Policy	Comment
1.3	It would be wise to also mention here the need for examination by an independent examiner and refer to both LPAs' local plans.
2.7	Make reference to Dartmoor's Landscape Character Assessment . It would be useful to also reference NPPF Paragraph 116 here.
3.7	A Neighbourhood plan is required to show that it is in general conformity with strategic policy of the LPA's local plan and reflects national planning policy framework to enable it to proceed.
3.10	The recommendation is that you should demonstrate conformity with the JLP as the West Devon Core Strategy is now considered out of date.
5.1	The strategic aims and the table relating them to particular policies is useful. It may also be helpful to refer to the relevant strategic aims after each policy.
Sections 1 to 5	These sections provide vital background information, but you may wish to consider whether some of the text could be removed to another background document in order to 'streamline' the NP and improve readability.
6.3	The SHMA was updated in Feb 2017. http://web.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/environmentandplanning/planning/planningpolicy/plymouthplan/ppevidencebase.htm
6.4	The Elfordtown site was considered through the SHLAA process, a technical process that does nothing more than consider if the site is technically feasible, it is not an indication that the site is suitable or will comply with strategic policy. Further assessment will be required to support this allocation. See : http://mycommunity.org.uk/resources/site-assessment-for-neighbourhood-plans/
6.6	This text should be updated with reference to JLP Policy TTV30 which indicates 10 dwellings for Buckland Monachorum and 10 for Crapstone.
6.9	This is a clear and useful explanation of settlement boundaries. Please refer to

	<p>the topic paper on settlement boundaries that has been recently consulted on and is still available to view at http://plymouth.objective.co.uk/portal/planning/jlp/jlpextras?tab=files</p>
6.11	See the comments above on affordable housing.
6.14	<p>Please note that the indicative housing numbers set out in JLP Policy TTV30 are the numbers intended to be provided by site allocations within neighbourhood plans. They do not include windfall.</p> <p>The site review provided at Annex O is not considered to be an adequate assessment of sites for the purposes of allocation in a neighbourhood plan. http://mycommunity.org.uk/resources/site-assessment-for-neighbourhood-plans/</p>
Policy RD1 – Meeting our Housing Need	<p>This policy should ideally be split into three: one policy for each housing site and one covering settlement boundary changes, if extensions are proposed for additional settlements. Each site allocation policy should be supported by evidence that it is deliverable and :</p> <p>a) state very clearly that the identified site is allocated for housing development and refer to a map available within the main text of the NP, showing the boundaries of the site clearly marked.</p> <p>b) State the number and type of dwellings (affordable/open market) that will be provided on the site.</p> <p>c) List relevant and reasonable criteria that development on the site will be expected to adhere to. This may include the delivery of appropriate infrastructure where it is considered necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.</p> <p>Elfordtown allocation - The DNP Local Plan strategic policy DMD 21 requires development to make 50% affordable housing provision. Consideration needs to be given on how this is to be achieved alongside a specification for older persons housing, given there is no indication of such need in the housing needs assessment. A suggested approach would be a revised and more detailed policy that includes provision for a minimum of 50% affordable housing with a % of the remaining open market allocated to meet provision for elderly. This would satisfy community aspirations while remaining in conformity with strategic policy.</p>
Policy RD2 - Windfall	<p>A clear definition of 'existing settlement' should be provided, is this those settlements with a defined settlement boundary and only sites within that boundary or is it to include any size settlement, including hamlets, groups of buildings? Does this refer to all housing development in which case how are new agricultural dwellings to be accommodated for example? You may want to consider whether this policy can usefully add to existing Local Plan policy to achieve community objectives.</p>
RD3	<p>This policy is very prescriptive and lacks clarity and evidence. If retained a definition of 'mixed development' should be provided, i.e. does it relate to tenure, size etc.</p>
Policy RD4 – Affordable housing	<p>This does not amount to a planning policy and should be considered as supporting text. A commitment for regular (5 Yr) review of housing needs would support a proactive commitment to meeting affordable housing need. See comments on affordable housing above.</p>
Policy ED1 –	<p>ED1 (b) indicates that this policy relates to the WDBC area only, if so then this</p>

Meeting the economic development need	needs to be made explicit, if not then it will also need to recognise NP interests and comply with DNP local plan policy.
ED2	This does not meet the stated aim at para 6.36 and appears unduly restrictive and impracticable. A positively worded policy encouraging broadband provision where viable would be more appropriate.
Policy ED3 – Redevelopment of employment to non- employment use	This policy should be reworded to acknowledge Permitted Development Rights at the beginning, e.g. ‘Unless Permitted Development Rights allow for such changes, proposals for the redevelopment or change of use....etc.’
Policy ED4 – Brownfield sites	The phrase ‘to stimulate the economy’ is ambiguous. Does it refer to the previously developed land or is it an aim of the policy? This policy is unlikely to have much effect unless two planning applications for similar development are submitted at the same time. How likely is this?
6.25	The only real protection that can be given to green space in a neighbourhood is designation as a Local Green Space. In order to be designated, Local Green Spaces must fulfil specific criteria as set out in the NPPF. ‘Most of the parish’ would not fit into this category but it may still be appropriate to designate small areas of green space that are demonstrably special to the community. See comments above.
E1 - Heritage	This should be stated in supporting text rather than in policy as policies should not duplicate existing policy. Refer to the specific relevant LPA and NPPF policies
E2 – Local Character	Consider what this policy adds to existing policy, especially JLP Dev20. Would it be better to include a commitment for the Parish Council to produce some local design guidance, rather than having a policy that does not add significantly to existing policy?
E3 – Climate change	As above – are these points adequately covered by Dev35?
E4 - Flooding	The wording of this policy is a little confused and needs attention. While it is appropriate to have a policy on flooding if particular local issues are not addressed in existing policy and protocols, you need to be careful you are not adding unreasonable requirements in terms of planning applications. For example, the wording currently suggests that if you propose a development anywhere in the parish you need to prove it will not affect flood risk in Milton Combe. While this may be appropriate for places upstream of Milton Combe, you need to be more specific.
E5	This may sit more comfortably as an economic policy, consideration should also be given within the text to avoiding adverse impact on landscape, heritage assets, wildlife and habitats.
S1 - Transport	The second part of this policy is unlikely to be considered reasonable by an examiner. How do you envisage it being met? You may need to alter the wording along the lines of ‘new development should be easily accessible by public transport’. See JLP figure 3.2 for a list of aspirational sustainability criteria for new development including distance to the nearest bus stop.
S2 – Car parking	It is not clear what you mean by ‘open spaces’ and why they would be compromised by a lack of parking? Please include a reference for the national parking standard you refer to. I am not aware of any up-to-date national

	standards. See the section on parking in this government planning update: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/planning-update-march-2015
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I hope you find these comments useful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like further clarification on any of them.

Please note that when the NP is submitted it will need to be accompanied by the documents listed in Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. I believe you have the necessary documents in hand, except I am not aware of a Consultation Statement having been written. Ideally you will also provide a document that summarises the evidence base for the NP, although this is not required by Regulation 15. Please do contact me if you would like any guidance on these documents.

Best wishes,

Mandy Goddard
Neighbourhood Planning Specialist