

HOLT PARISH COUNCIL

ANALYSIS OF THE WILTSHIRE COUNCIL “COMMENTS ON THE HOLT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FINAL DRAFT” RECEIVED IN JANUARY 2016.

The document recognises that “no formal consultation response from Wiltshire Council was provided during the Regulation 16 consultation”. We would like to draw the Inspector’s attention to the fact that this resulted in at least a three month delay in the timetable for progressing the Plan, which means that it will not be in place, with its full planning weight, before the formal planning application for the Tannery development is submitted. This may have implications for the eventual shape of the development.

However, it is acknowledged that most of their comments are supportive.

We would also draw the Inspector’s attention to our detailed comments below –

1. Map of Holt - Better map required on p2 – Agreed
2. A Vision for Holt – Reword the sentence about the settlement boundary. Suggestion – “Development within the settlement boundary will be encouraged providing the green spaces within that boundary are preserved.”
3. Policy H1.1 Tannery Site. They question the viability of the proposed 50/50 mix of housing and commercial use of the site. This is based on the saved policy from the former West Wilts District Council in their Core Strategy, which defines the Tannery site as an “Area of Opportunity” -viz:

“An 'area of opportunity' in Holt (designated in the West Wiltshire District Plan) will be retained as it continues to offer a suitable location for mixed use development in accordance with Core Policy 1. Development of this site should be delivered through a comprehensive master planning process, and should be focused on providing live/work or local employment opportunities to help reduce the need for commuting”.

It is also derived from the survey of the views of the village on the future of the Tannery, which is included as one of the background documents to the Plan.

It should be regarded as an aspiration to make sure the site is not all housing, and is based on the recent village experience of the Spa development, which was planned to be mixed use but ended up as 100% housing.

They also quote Core Policy 43 which seeks 40% affordable housing on the site, which the NHP regards as excessive (see below).

The suggested mix of housing types is regarded as not something amenable to Planning, but we still feel this should be part of our Plan.

They feel a full Transport Assessment should be provided as part of the planning application – Agreed

4. Policy H1.2 Affordable Housing – A map showing Star Ground should be provided – Agreed

5. Policy H1.3 Policy for the Occupation of Affordable Housing – They say our suggested policy is inconsistent with planning policy and impractical to implement. However, the response from Wilts Council is wrong. Section 4.13.2 does not apply where there is an adopted Neighbourhood Plan. The relevant section in their Allocation Policy is:

“9.1 Local Connection

9.1.1 Homes will be allocated to applicants with a local connection to a town or parish or where an area has an adopted neighbourhood plan. Priority will be given to applicants with a local connection to the designated neighbourhood area as defined within the neighbourhood plan. A local connection will be based on the following criteria:-

- A person who is resident in that area. The residency will need to be permanent and have lived in the area 6 months out of the last 12 or 3 years out of the last 5, or
- A person who is in permanent paid employment or has a fixed term contract for a minimum of one year or permanent offer of paid employment in the area, or is self-employed and works predominately in the area or
- A person with close family (grand-parents, parents, legal guardian, adult children or brothers and sisters) who have lived in the parish or town for 5 years or longer.”

This is slightly different from our original wording (e.g. length of residence) but we are happy to accept this.

6. Policy H3.1e – Conversion of 2 smaller properties into 1 larger unit – now exempt from planning so delete – Agreed

7. Policy H3.3 – Conversion of farm buildings – They say our policy of supporting such conversion for residential use rather than “employment, tourism, cultural and community uses” is inconsistent with planning guidance. Guidance required please.

8. Policy T.1 – Mitigate the impact of traffic on the village by changing the B3107 – They feel that some of the traffic management measures are inappropriate as “the primary function of a B class road is the movement of traffic”. They fail to recognise that our primary aim is to reduce the intimidation felt by pedestrians and cyclists in the village, which can only be achieved by reducing the average speed of the traffic, and cutting down the number of HGV transits. The B3107 “does not meet the criteria for 20mph limits” – if our plans were implemented, it would! (It would already if it was in another county.)

9. Task T.8 – Negotiate a ban vehicles over 8.5 tonnes MGW on the B3107 - About two years ago, the B3107 through Holt was recognised by the Traffic Engineers as having the worst problem with freight traffic in the whole of Wiltshire. They then carried out a study using Automatic Number Plate Recognition of HGV traffic, and concluded that we do not have a problem as the number of transits is low, so this Task should be deleted. Their study has been shown to be inaccurate by our “eyeball” counts (shortly to be repeated) which counted about ten times more HGVs . We believe we should continue to press for a weight limit – there are other routes for heavy lorries available.