

Responder no.:**REDACTED COMMENTS*****Disclaimer:***

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FEEDBACK STARTS BELOW:

The proposed approach of the Plan in terms of promoting new sites for development over and above what is required by the Test Valley Local Plan 2016 is to be supported. However the limiting of new development to the village of King's Somborne and the lack of any policies supporting self and custom build housing is disappointing for the reasons set out below.

Policy E3 Preserving Landscape Features, Views and Surrounding Farmland

As set out above the preparation of the housing policies of the Plan do not appear to have taken account of the advice in the NPPF regarding meeting the need for custom and self-build homes. The Steering Group are asked to review their approach and to consider introducing a more positive approach to supporting this sector of the housing market.

“No housing development shall be permitted within the existing hamlets of Horsebridge, Brook, Compton or Up Somborne. Developments are not permitted outside of the current developed area”

4.2 The Plan is strongly focussed on maintaining the character of the parish with new development centred in and around King's Somborne village itself. The Plan's objectives are clear in relation to future development include restricting development within the parish to the immediate area of the village of King's Somborne. Policy E3 specifically lists those settlements where development would not be permitted.

4.10 The Steering Group is asked to review its approach in respect of limiting the consideration of development to the village of King's Somborne and to consider the merits of a more flexible approach in respect of the other settlements of the parish.

4.3 The rationale for this approach is that it is the only village with a defined settlement boundary ref section 2.1. This approach does not reflect that set out in para 55 of the NPPF (2012). It envisages that development in principle is acceptable in smaller settlements where development in one may support the services of another nearby. The NPPF does not prohibit development in settlements which have not been defined or are without facilities

4.4 The NPPG advises that “ all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas and so blanket policies restricting housing development in some small settlements and preventing other settlements from expanding should be avoided unless their use is supported by robust evidence”

4.5 The Court of Appeal case of Braintree District Council versus Secretary of State ref C1/2017/3292 made specific reference to this advice in the NPPF and NPPG in its judgement. The Court said development should not necessarily be limited to settlements defined in a local plan. Planning inspectors at appeals are taking a similar view in the granting of permissions.

4.6 It is understood that the scope of the Plan has been discussed with the Borough Council and that it has advised that to define policy boundaries for other settlements within the parish would raise the issue of conformity with the adopted Local Plan. In the light of the guidance in the NPPF, NPPG regarding the issue of general conformity and case law on the matter the Steering Group is asked to reconsider its approach.

4.7 From a review of the supporting information and in particular the Parish Survey of 2016 it would not appear that the merits of having some development in the other settlements of the parish was promoted. Appendix 2.0 Housing Requirement included results from the Parish Survey and reported on response to the question which asked “ where would you prefer new homes to be built in the village?” This would appear to only to apply to King’s Somborne. It is worth noting that 61% of those who responded (244 responses) supported infill sites (small gaps between houses along an existing road frontage).

4.9 Policy E3 refers to all the locations listed as hamlets. In section 3.1 a distinction is made between smaller settlements and hamlets. It is suggested that the policy should reflect that distinction to ensure consistency within the Plan if its approach is not changed.

The potential for additional development has been confined to the village of King’s Somborne. The parish survey of 2016 does not appear to have explored the opportunity/merits of additional development in the other settlements of the Plan area. Limiting the scope of the Plan in terms of housing at the outset of its preparation has excluded the evaluation and merits of meeting the housing needs of the parish across the Plan area.

There is an inconsistency within the plan regarding the description of settlements. The Plan describes the settlements of the area as comprising the main settlement of King’s Somborne three smaller settlements of Up Somborne, Horsebridge and Brook and two small hamlets of Compton and Marsh Court. This is not consistent with the wording in Policy E3

The housing requirement does not appear to have considered making provision for self and custom build housing,

The policy does not permit development within the other settlements of the Plan area. There is also an inconsistency of the description of the settlements listed compared with section 3.1 see above. The policy as drafted does not reflect the approach as set out in para 55 of the NPPF. It envisages that development in principle is acceptable in smaller settlements . it does not prohibit development in settlements which have not been defined in local plans or are without facilities. See also the advice in the NPPG.

4.8 Limiting the scope of the Plan at such an early stage in the process is unfortunate and has resulted in a possible option for providing some additional housing opportunities in the parish being excluded from consideration.