

Appendix 1

South Cambridgeshire District Council's response to the consultation on the submission Gamlingay Neighbourhood Plan

1. South Cambridge District Council (SCDC) is taking the opportunity, through the Regulation 16 consultation, to comment further on the Gamlingay Neighbourhood Plan.
2. SCDC has worked with Gamlingay Parish Council (PC) during the preparation of the plan. We appreciate the hard work that has gone into getting their neighbourhood plan this far along the process. There have been meetings with the neighbourhood plan team to discuss the plan as it has evolved. SCDC has provided constructive comments to the team at these meetings followed up by detailed notes to assist them in their plan making.
3. SCDC notes that some changes to the Submission version of the Gamlingay Neighbourhood Plan have been made as a result of the comments that we submitted during the pre-submission consultation (Regulation 14). These comments by SCDC are set out in the Gamlingay Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement – Appendix 9 pages 72-130.
4. The comments we make now concentrate on matters that relate directly to whether, in our opinion, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

Policies Map and Maps

5. Planning Practice Guidance states that “The policies map should illustrate geographically the policies in the plan and be reproduced from, or based on, an Ordnance Survey map.” (Reference ID: 61-002-20190315) Although it is acknowledged that a single Policies Map is not a requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan, SCDC considers that, for a Plan area like Gamlingay, such a map helps in providing clarity to those policies that include site allocations and site-specific issues. The Plan does include Map 7 which is entitled ‘Key Policy Areas 1-12’. This map has evolved since the Regulation 14 version and now includes most of the site-specific policies in the Plan. It remains at A4 size which we consider to be too small to clearly show all the policy areas. There are some symbols in the key which still do not reference which policy they refer to e.g., Views and 200m cordon for Gamlingay Wood. Within the central built-up area of the parish, it is particularly difficult to identify the boundaries of sites which, unless changed, could result in a misinterpretation of the Neighbourhood Plan when being used to determine planning applications.
6. The problem of clarity is compounded by the fact that there are several maps in the Plan which do not always clearly show boundaries of any site allocations and designations. Such an example is Map 6, showing village

amenities. For future users of the Plan – including decision makers such as planning officers and the planning committee – or on appeal - Planning Inspectors, who may not be totally familiar with the parish it is essential that any boundaries/areas are clearly and definitively shown with simple keys indicating what each symbol on the maps means. We have found the keys difficult to read both in the printed versions of the Plan or when enlarged on the screen of a laptop. This risks undermining the effectiveness of the plan and its policies. The font used must be larger.

7. Many of the maps contain too much information showing areas not related to the part of the Plan where they have been positioned. For example, Map 9 showing Local Green Space also has references to GAM1. Map 10 shows walking and cycling routes as well as the Development Framework and open spaces that are not protected in the Plan or in the Local Plan. Further, the Plan should also have a map specifically showing the views being protected under Policies GAM3 and GAM11.
8. All maps need to ensure that they have the required copyright permissions which needs to be correctly worded especially when Ordnance Survey (OS) maps have been used - the copyright and licence information must be legible.

Comments on the draft Plan in plan order

9. As a footnote on page 8 a Disclaimer has been included. We have not seen this included in a Neighbourhood Plan before and do not think it is necessary here given that the Plan is the responsibility of the Parish Council's and, it is them who have approved the plan for submission to SCDC.

Introduction

10. Map 1 shows the neighbourhood area for Gamlingay – we would recommend using a stronger map base that enable readers to find key information. In this instance, because land west of the parish boundary is in Bedfordshire, it might help if parish and district names and the district boundary were illustrated, and the boundaries clearly shown. A Neighbourhood Plan must be clear about the area that it covers.

Chapter 2

11. Map 4 shows landscape settings. It would help the future user of the Plan if there were a greater distinction between the green shadings shown on the map. They look somewhat the same. The key refers to 'examples of good design' but does not name these two places or provide any supporting details for why these are examples of good design.
12. Map 6 showing Village Amenities –This map is attempting to show much information across the whole parish. By having a parish wide map this has resulted in the village centre, where many of the facilities are located, at a

very small scale and it is not possible to define the exact location of those facilities.

Chapter 3 Our vision

13. With regards to Objective 1, it is not clear how the reference to 'high environmental standards' is defined. For the sake of clarity, it may be better for the Neighbourhood Plan to promote new development that seeks to 'exceed the baseline policy requirements for sustainability set out in section 4 of the Local Plan, supporting the transition to net zero carbon and the move away from fossil fuels.'

Chapter 4 Policies

14. In general, there is nothing in the Plan to acknowledge whether it has been prepared in the context of the 2019 NPPF, which would have been current at the time of the Regulation 14 consultation, or the 2021 NPPF which is now current.

Housing Growth

15. Justification – The footnote does not reference the latest NPPF.
16. Paragraph 4.10 – This paragraph is telling a confusing story about housing within the parish. It does not need to outline the methodology used by SCDC to provide the housing requirement for Gamlingay as is required by paragraph 67 in the NPPF (2021). This housing requirement for Gamlingay has always been 26 dwellings and has not been amended.
17. We have consulted with our housing team and they remain concerned about the housing needs survey (HNS) that accompanies the Plan. Whilst noting that the term 'recent snapshot of housing need' has been added to the description of the HNS we do not feel that the figures are a robust assessment of need as the assessment only looks at the needs of the 90 respondents that completed the Gamlingay survey. It should also be recognised that the 2018 Bedfordshire RCC Survey represents a snapshot in time and that new evidence might come forward during the Plan period to demonstrate a different need.
18. We consider that the Plan incorrectly states in paragraph 4.14 that there is therefore no anticipated requirement for housing exception sites during the lifetime of this neighbourhood plan. An Exception site is an exception to policy based on the local housing needs at that point in time. The Plan cannot state there is no further need during the next 5 years for this reason until a HNS is undertaken at that moment in time. The housing needs figure is different from the local housing need for affordable housing which is likely to vary over time. The statement that there is no anticipated requirement for housing exception sites (Paragraph 4.14) might be undermined if a new survey were carried out that identified a need.

GAM1 New Buildings

19. Policy Bullet 1 - This policy could be more specific about meeting the local housing need for smaller dwellings for youngsters and for downsizing.
20. Policy Bullet 2 - The Policy is seeking to set standards of insulation that are restricted by the 2015 Ministerial Statement that states that neighbourhood plans should not set local standards. Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings A is regulated by building regulations not planning policy. By including this requirement, the policy would not be taking account of national planning policy and likely to be removed by an examiner.
21. Policy Bullet 3 - Whilst noting that Objective 1 of your Plan refers to homes being adaptable across the lifetime of the building and that this aim had been included in the 3rd bullet of Policy GAM1 there needs to evidence for this. It is not clear that a need been established that more homes than the 5% identified in Policy H/9: Housing Mix in the Local Plan needing to meet M4(2) and/or M4(3) of the optional requirements in the Building Regulations been identified for the area.
22. Policy Bullet 3 – The reasoning for the requirement for a new development to be fitted with an electric charging point is not set out in the supporting text. Also, there is no information set out as to how this would be applied for flatted developments
23. Policy Final paragraph The Government introduced national technical standards for housing in 2015. A Written Ministerial Statement explains that neighbourhood plans should not set out any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings. In the light of this Statement, we do not consider it appropriate to set the standards for dwellings in this paragraph, although a neighbourhood plan can set requirements for non-residential buildings.

GAM2 Site allocation

24. The policy should state simply that the site at West Road is allocated for housing as identified on Map 7. It does not need to add that it will meet the housing needs requirement provided by SCDC as part of its duty set out in paragraph 67 of NPPF. This explanation should be within the supporting text for the policy. The policy is not referencing the correct paragraph in the latest published NPPF. It should be paragraph 67 rather than paragraph 65.
25. Paragraph 4.25 –There is a reference to the reserved matters planning application for Land South of West Road. It would be better to mention that, as of 21.10.2021, this reserved matters application (planning ref. S/3868/18/RM) has yet to be determined.
26. The explanation as to why this site-specific allocation policy has been included in the Plan is incorrect/ misleading. In this instance it is considered that the Parish Council should be allocating this site because the principle of

development has been accepted and it safeguards the development should the permission lapse. We have previously suggested the following wording to explain the advantage of having a site allocation in the Plan:

“By allocating sites and meeting the identified housing requirement, the Neighbourhood Plan fully accords with the requirements of Paragraph 14 of the NPPF in meeting the identified housing requirement in full and therefore providing some certainty in determining proposals for new housing should the District Council not be able to demonstrate a five-years supply of housing sites in the near future.”

27. This policy is accompanied by Map 8 showing the proposed site layout for the West Road Site which is from the planning permission. There is no key or annotation to explain the layout or references to where the site is within the village for those who do not have local knowledge. It would benefit from annotations showing site features, access, connections and surrounding land uses.
28. The map would need to acknowledge a copyright.

GAM3 Local Character

29. First bullet of the policy - The VDG identifies a number of architectural and spatial characteristics which are important to local character. The policy is being contradictory by stating in the first sentence that development will be supported where it follows the guidance in the VDG but then identifying only existing vernacular buildings as reference points for new design in the bullet point.
30. Second bullet point of policy - Protecting the unique structural layout of the village with the distinct gap between the main village and its hamlets is a key issue for the Plan. An inset map accompanying this policy annotated to show clearly the unique character of the parish with the main village and hamlets would have helped to clarify the purpose of the policy. Such a clear map is included within the VDG (Figure 6 page 9).
31. Second bullet point of policy - In the third sentence mention is made of preserving key views to and from the village and referring to both Maps 4 and 7. Only one map needs to be referenced in the policy and we would suggest Map 7.
32. These views also appear to be mentioned /protected by Policy GAM11. The views are listed in Appendix 2 and shown on the Key Policies areas Map 7. The last sentence of paragraph 4.32 states that the views are not just listed in Appendix 2 but illustrated which they are not. In neither policy GAM3 nor policy GAM11 is there a list of the views to be protected nor such a list in the supporting text. We consider without this information that this would be a difficult policy to implement successfully for developers drafting schemes and development management officers determining planning applications that may include proposals that impact views.

33. We are aware that additional assessment work was carried out following the Regulation 14 consultation and this has been submitted as an evidence document – Landscape and Visual Analysis (LVA) (July 2021). Most of the views listed in Appendix 2 of the Plan were identified in the VDG but the recent analysis identified two additional viewpoints, but no indication is given within the Plan as to which of the views these are. These are mentioned in the LVA as Key Views 6 and 7 but the Key View 7 Mill Bridge does not appear to have made it into the Plan as only 6 views are listed in Appendix 2. It is not clear whether View 7 would impact the Mill Hill employment Policy GAM5. It would help the future user of the plan if each view listed in Appendix 2 had a specific reference within a single policy and an inset map clearly showed each view. A brief description of each view could be included in the supporting text setting out its value. Such information is set out in the LVA. There should be a clearer link between the LVA and the policy protecting views.
34. Views appear to be to north and east of village. The policy protecting the hamlets is to the west and south which results in a cordon of protection around the village. We are concerned that this may not leave any room for future development. Developers could question the sustainability of the Plan if too much is protected.

Local Economy and employment

35. We welcome the inclusion of Map 5A which shows the existing business sites, but this does not clearly identify the specific employment sites mentioned in the two employment policies. This would help those future users of the Plan who do not have a local knowledge of the parish. Other features are also shown on this map which do not relate to employment which is confusing e.g., Gamlingay Wood Cordon.
36. There are two policies regarding employment - GAM4 Local Employment Sites and GAM5 New Employment Sites – However both policies contain similar considerations to be taken into account by a developer and it is not entirely sure what is the difference between these two policies other than GAM5 is allocating a site whereas GAM4 is identifying sites.
37. Both policies include the permitted uses of the various sites e.g., Use class E(g). But the new use classes (2020) allows the change of use within Use Class E without requiring consent so the policies cannot specify a specific element of Use class E. This would be contrary to national policy and therefore not meet a basic conditions test.

GAM4 Local Employment Sites

38. Station Rd, Church Street, Drove Road and Green End Industrial sites are each treated slightly differently in Policy GAM4 Local Employment Sites. In our earlier comments we had suggested that each site should have its own separate policy. We are aware that each site has its own character and requirements and constraints. Proposals will need to be suitable in scale for each location. Those sites on the edge of the village will need different

consideration to those within the village. The policy currently drafted says all proposals are expected to protect and safeguard landscape features and designations. Each employment site may have different requirements/ constraints which are not clearly shown within this policy. Our Economic Development Officer does not consider that the policy as currently worded makes it clear what is appropriate development for each site. Such clarity would help any developer/ business/planner understand the key site issues early on. This would help expedite any application process and avoid unnecessary costs for all parties. If the aim is to support local businesses, the provision of as much information as possible up front is important.

39. Drove Road is outside of the development framework boundary of the village. The Local Plan Policy S/7: Development Frameworks allows for site allocations to be permitted outside of the framework if they are within a made neighbourhood plan. Further development at Drove Road in GAM4 could be contrary to this strategic policy in the Local Plan if it is not a specific allocation.
40. The Drove Road employment site appears to be shown as two distinct sites on Map 5A, but without specific identification this is an assumption having to be made by the user of the Plan. The existing policy had evolved to refer specifically to the expansion of businesses in situ. We are aware that there has been concerns about the proposals in the local community which led to the site being included in GAM4 rather than GAM5. It is stated in paragraph 4.47 that the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) concluded that development of previously undeveloped land at Drove Road has increased potential to lead to the loss of productive agricultural land, has increased potential to impact on biodiversity habitats and local character without mitigation measures. Whilst Drove Road is not being designated as a new employment area and policy GAM11 refers to Biodiversity net gain, given the results of the SEA specifically reference Drove Road, we consider that there needs to be specific reference in GAM4 on mitigating the impact of the expansion of businesses on biodiversity habitats/biodiversity net gain.
41. For Drove Road there are specific criteria that must be followed if a development proposal is to be successful. In the supporting text the justification for permitting an increase of 25% of the existing footprint is that put forward by local businesses in the area. Would 25% be suitable for all buildings within the Drove Rd sites? It is unclear whether an assessment has been carried out to confirm this. If development has to follow specific design criteria to be of an appropriate scale (what scale is appropriate?) and integrated into the landscape (how to achieve this). It should be spelt out more clearly within the policy and explained in the supporting text. This will assist a developer to ensure a proposal meets the requirements of this policy and for a development management officer or the Planning Committee at SCDC to determine a planning application against this policy. Would a version of Local Plan Policy E/12: New Employment Development in Villages relating to just the expansion of existing premises on Drove Road be more straightforward or indeed would the Local Plan policy be sufficient? There could be an explanation of what is considered appropriate scale in the supporting text.

GAM5 New employment sites allocations

42. Mill Hill is the only site allocated in GAM5 so this policy could be site specific to Mill Hill. Is Mill Hill to be an Employment site or a Rural Business Development Area? Both terms are used within the policy.
43. Paragraph 4.53 – This mentions that there are two new rural business development areas being allocated in the Plan when within the Policy GAM5 there is only one.
44. We have previously expressed our concerns on the inclusion of the B8 use in the policy wording for both employment policies. This has now been removed from GAM4 but remains in GAM5. Would applications for development of B8 uses be approved on the Mill Hill site regardless of scale or specific location constraints? Without restrictions on the scale of development that would be supported this could result in large sheds and the associated traffic generation. The policy must be clear on what would be supported. Although it has been highlighted to us that such uses already exist on this site this policy criterion would be positively encouraging such a use. If this is the case it could be contrary to the Local Plan Policy E/11: Large Scale Warehousing and Distribution Centres. This is a strategic policy in the Local Plan. This policy would not meet the basic condition test about being in general conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan.
45. We continue to have concerns about the way the policy is drafted. It does not restrict the amount of employment use allowed in the Mill Hill area – this is not supported by SCDC. We are not sure what the parish council's vision for this area is and how it is envisaged development would take place. Is it proposed to be piecemeal redevelopment on these sites or a comprehensive scheme? There would be implications for the provision of infrastructure to support such development. We would consider that if this site is to be developed comprehensively there should be a requirement included in the policy for a design framework or brief. A brief would help to shape the future development of the site and would be a useful tool to determine the appropriate capacity of the site identifying the constraints and opportunities of the site, setting out the design parameters for the layout and appearance, exploring improved connections and the impacts on existing infrastructure.
46. There are residential properties including a care home within the boundaries of the Mill Hill area. Whilst recognising that this policy now includes a section that states that any employment proposal has to demonstrate that there will be no adverse impacts on the rural environment and amenity or property of nearby residents, we remain concerned at the potential scale of development that could be allowed by this policy and controlling the amenity impact on nearby residents. We have previously suggested that the parish council should review the extent of what could be allowed by this policy.

Community amenities and facilities

47. We consider that this section would have benefited from having the supporting text for each different policy being with the policy rather than part of a long introduction that includes many issues.

GAM6 Community Facilities

48. We consider that the first part of this policy is not saying anything specific for Gamlingay as it just repeating the Local Plan protecting services and facilities (SC/3) or meeting community needs (SC/4). It is unclear why mention is made here of the support for the creation of additional sports pitches.

GAM7- Designation of former First School buildings, Green End (TL 234647 52413)

49. Map 9 - It would help if Map 9 only included the policies relevant to this part of the Plan. We are unsure what GAM1 Allocated Local Plan Site refers to as this policy does not allocate any sites. Also, open spaces are shown and there is no policy relating to these in the Plan unless these are the ones listed in Appendix 2.

GAM8 Reuse of first school building.

50. We suggest that rather than stating a set period over which the site is safeguarded and could remain empty that the site is safeguarded unless it can be demonstrated that the site has been marketed for a period at a realistic price for educational and community uses, and nothing has been forthcoming.
51. Within the policy the first sentence ends with a collection of letters as examples. (Eg. (a,b,e,f,g)) We are not clear what this means.
52. We have previously suggested that the policy could have as a requirement that a design guide/masterplan be prepared for the site. Such a brief could clarify policies and their application to the site. There may be different interests in the development of the site, and these may sometimes conflict. The preparation of a brief provides an opportunity for such conflicts to be resolved and provide sound urban design principles to the development of the site.

GAM9 Transport provision

53. Does the car parking element of the policy forming the second part of the policy add anything specific for Gamlingay? The Local Plan Policy TI/3: Parking Provision is design led.

54. Second part of the policy – How will a housing development provide ‘enough car parking’ ...within the ‘development envelope’. Enough is not defined anywhere nor is the development envelope. Development should be providing car parking in accordance with the adopted standards unless the Neighbourhood Plan suggests otherwise through robust evidence.
55. There is no evidence or mention in the supporting text to support why level multi use surfaces should be avoided – is this a particular problem in Gamlingay? Context and number of units served should influence the road layout. Shared surfaces streets influence driver behaviour to reduce vehicular speed and improve road safety. We consider that, without supporting evidence, this is overly prescriptive.
56. We also have concerns about this part of the policy from a historic environment perspective. At present, it is framed very rigidly, and we are anxious that it might inadvertently lead to heavily engineered layouts in very small-scale developments, especially small plots leading off the village’s central streets. At present, such developments often do have shared surfaces, and the VDG identifies some developments with shared surfaces as being successful. We consider that this section should be more flexible to avoid unintentional harm to the historic character of the village.

GAM10 Contributions

57. There has been discussions between the Section 106 officer and the parish council about this policy. He considers the principle of asking for contribution fine but that there needs to be a clear idea of what is to be included in the parish improvement plan for cycling etc. There are a number of issues that he considers need to be clarified.
58. Policy GAM10 mentions Map 10 – it is not clear whether the routes shown on this map are planned or existing routes to be improved. It is a map that includes other policies which distract from the cycling routes.
59. It is not clear whether the contributions set out in GAM10 are to be calculated on the gross internal floor area or gross external floor area. Are the contributions to be chargeable on extensions to existing business premises or whether (as currently worded) it is only chargeable on new units. Is there to be an intended floor on contributions (i.e. no contributions are payable where the total payable would be less than say £500?)
60. Clarification is needed as to whether the rates are subject to annual increase in indexation and if so which indexation is to be used. SCDC would suggest that indexation is applied annually from the date the plan is made by reference to BCIS All in Tender.
61. Policy GAM10 requires *contributions of £21 per m² of floor space (for business developments), and £10 per m² of floor space (for housing developments)*. An explanation is needed as to why the housing contribution

is £10 rather than £29 that Appendix 3 would suggest is the most appropriate figure to use. Consideration could be given to reducing the contribution for major developments where in kind works to provide new paths are required.

62. The plan should explain how much money is expected to be generated during the life of the plan, what alternative funding sources may exist and whether there are any particular priority areas in the event that the full amount is not secured.
63. The plan should explain whether there is County Council support for this proposal both in Cambridgeshire and Central Bedfordshire. We would imagine this is a key point to the implementation of the policy.
64. The plan should explain the delivery mechanism for provision of new footpaths, i.e. will this be direct Parish Council commissioning.

4.6 Natural Environment

65. It may help to have the supporting text included in the justification section to be directly linked to the policy placed in the Plan next to the relevant text.

GAM11 Landscape and natural environment

66. The policy has evolved since the pre-submission draft. There is no explanation in the supporting text as to what is meant by the term 'biodiversity metric tool' which is referred to in the first sentence. The examples of biodiversity projects should be included in the supporting text rather than in the policy. It does not create a clear policy for implementing.
67. The first section of this policy refers to key 'wildlife corridors...and a network of green spaces/infrastructure' but the Plan does not provide a map to show where the existing corridors and green network are within the parish. Appendix 2 entitled Gamlingay's green infrastructure does provide lists of different green features but unfortunately these have not been brought together in a map in the Plan. The VDG does show open space on page 14 which could have been included in the Plan to give added weight to protection of corridors. The VDG talks of green fingers of landscape from centre of village to rural edge – these could have been shown in a map in this Plan and thereby helped to protect them.
68. Last sentence of first section of the policy – We consider that the proposed network of green spaces should be for habitat creation and not just for sport and recreation.
69. The second section of the policy - The policy states that only housing and employment developments should not obstruct, or damage valued sites referred to – surely all development should protect these sites? It is not clear in the policy how the green spaces within a development are not to become isolated rather than linked to the wider green network of the parish especially if this is not mapped. How could this policy be implemented without identifying the green sites included in Appendix 2 on a map?

GAM12 Gamlingay Wood

70. Our ecology officer considers that policy should refer to the fact that this wood is an ancient woodland. It is designated as an SSSI because it is an ancient woodland, so this designation is important.
71. The 200m cordon we understand is to allow for countryside uses for those using the woodland. This should be explained more clearly in the supporting text rather than simply stating it is for the enjoyment of future generations but then mentioning in the policy that it is to allow for small scale sustainable construction for the traditional woodland industry. This needs to be explained and evidenced as to why the 200m cordon is chosen as opposed to some other distance.