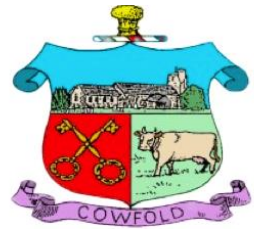# Cowfold Neighbourhood Development Plan
Response to Independent Examiner's Clarification Note

This note has been prepared by the Cowfold Neighbourhood Plan (CNP) Steering Group on behalf of the Cowfold Parish Council. We are grateful for the opportunity to provide further clarification on the points raised.

Policy 2: Green Infrastructure

Is the policy intended to be general in its effect rather than to identify specific elements of green infrastructure?

If this is so, how does the Parish Council anticipate that the District Council will be able to interpret the policy in a consistent way throughout the Plan period?

Yes, the policy is intended to be general in its effect with the expectation that any proposals will deliver net gains/improvements to the Green Infrastructure.

We seek to ensure that there will be no net loss in Green Infrastructure and that any proposals should deliver an overall net gain in Green Infrastructure whether On-site or Off-site.

Policy 3: Local Green Space

I can see the relationship between the policy and the NPPF's approach to local green spaces (LGSs).

Nevertheless, is there a specific reason why the policy has attempt to identify a series of circumstances where development might be supported which would affect the proposed LGSs and which goes beyond the matter-of-fact approach anticipated in the NPPF?

The CNP recognises that there may be circumstances where existing Local Green Space is unavoidably compromised. The Policy attempts to provide flexibility by setting out circumstances whereby this may be mitigated. However, where the exceptions are covered by National Policy we accept that these points, a, b, c & d, are intended to provide clarity and agree that they could be removed with paragraph (i) amended to meet the Basic Conditions.

Policy 4: Conservation Area

The approach included in the policy is entirely appropriate in a general sense.

However, is the second part of the policy designed to highlight that the identified properties have a particular significance in the conservation area?

The Conservation area covers all the centre of the village including some features which are relatively modern. The features listed are of local and historical interest as they link directly to the formation of the village even if they might not otherwise have particular architectural or heritage value. We recognise that the Conservation status provides protection but included

the list to inform and clarify. We appreciate that it could be felt that this list is inappropriate as part of this policy and would be better included as part of an Aim.

Policy 5: Open Space

As I read the second part of the policy it appears to offer a stronger degree of protection to open spaces to that proposed in Policy 3 for the LGSs?

Was this the Parish Council's intention?

If so, is it correct given that the open spaces have not been considered worthy for LGS designation?

No, it is not intended to provide a higher degree of protection to the Open Space areas than that afforded to the LGS areas. The Open Space areas have not been listed as we did not want to limit this to a particular list but wished to establish an approach. These areas may have a strong local heritage or recreational interest but do not meet the tests to list them as LGS. In the case of the Community Space proposed under Policy 11 and Policy 12, we would consider these as Open Space today but post development it may well be appropriate to consider them for LGS status.
Cowfold is defined by its rural location and its countryside setting therefore it is felt to be important to have protection for the Open Spaces that provide this, whether they are existing or to form part of any development. There is an additional concern that where a development is to be built that might affect an existing Open Space, that the replacement Open Space should be made available before any development commences.

Policy 6: Community Services and Facilities

Did the Parish Council consider identifying particular facilities (beyond the generality of paragraphs 5.3.2 and 5.3.3) to which the policy would apply?

Yes, we did consider listing the particular facilities but felt doing so might limit the policy to those facilities listed and so we chose to have a policy providing a general approach. In a village of this size, there are only about 600 dwellings in the main village, clubs and societies may consist of relatively few members and be relatively informal. We felt that this should not reduce their importance. As an example, the Cowfold Village History Society has collated some very important research and collected many locally important artifacts despite being a small society. Our concern is that should a development in some way result in the loss of this or any of the other small village societies then this would be a loss that we could not support. We are not aware of any existing list of all such Community Services and Facilities but if it was felt that including such a list would be of benefit, such a list could be collated.

Policy 9: Residential Development Principles

Is this policy intended to apply throughout the parish? If so, might it have unintended consequences?

Yes, it is intended to apply throughout the Parish however on reflection it is evident that it was written on the basis of approved developments. It is not intended to imply that developments that comply with Policy 9 principles are accepted irrespective of location. An additional clause clarifying that any development should be within or adjoining the settlement edge could clarify this aspect. In essence any development needs to comply with the HDPF policies before the CNP Policy 9 can be applied.

Policy 10: Windfall Housing

The policy approach is entirely correct.

However, does it add any parish value to existing local policies?

We recognise that this policy relies heavily on the HDPF which details a level of Windfall development. We felt it was important to include Policy 10 in the CNP considering the local audience and so prefer to retain it.

Policies 11/12: Brook Hill, CNP01 and Potters, CNP03

The policies are good examples of a criteria-based approach for the allocation of development sites. In turn they will assist significantly in promoting high quality outcomes.

We thank you for your comments which are much appreciated. We have tried throughout the process to find a balance between all interests.

Policy 14: Employment

In i) am I correct in concluding that a-d are four separate types of development which will be supported rather than setting out a requirement that any development has to satisfy each of the four matters?

Yes, it is correct, in effect i) is intended to be read as a. or b. or c. or d. although it is not intended that the proposals cannot satisfy more than one of these criteria. The policy could be revised to state that proposals should satisfy at least one of the listed criteria.

In ii) am I correct in concluding that the reverse is the case and development proposals need to meet each of the identified factors?

Yes, it is correct in that ii) is intended to confirm that proposals will be supported provided all four criteria are met in full.

Policy 15: Communications

Does iii) need to take account of permitted development rights?

Yes, this policy is intended to take account of permitted development rights. We welcome modifications to the policy to ensure it meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy 16: Car Parking Provision

Does i) add any value beyond the approach set out in ii)?

The intention of i) is to include any development including but not limited to commercial, recreational and residential. ii) Is a very specific clause relating to residential development.

Monitoring and Review

Section 9 of the Plan addresses these important matters very well.

We thank you for your comment, we have tried to take a practical approach considering the changing circumstances that may arise.

Policies Map

The various maps are generally very effective. I will be recommending that they include keys to bring the clarity required by the NPPF.

Does the Parish Council have any observations on this proposition?

The intention was to provide clarity for the wider audience and so we included the keys within the maps. This also reflects the limited technical expertise of the group producing online policies maps. Following your comments and a review of the CNP we note that we have in any case accidentally omitted a Key on more than one occasion. To meet the Basic Conditions, we are amenable to additional amendments to the policies map including a new legend/key to ensure accuracy and legibility of the Policies Map.

Representations

Does the Parish Council wish to comment on any of the representations made to the Plan?

We are delighted with the extent to which these representations support the draft CNP. Some comments, including those relating to Housing Need, and other processes utilised during the preparation of this plan are noted. We take comfort from the HDC comments which are very supportive, specifically with regard to the Housing Need and believe we have adhered to a rigorous process throughout without bias or favour. We have included an early review to acknowledge the emerging HDC Local Plan and the rate of change in this environment.

Specific comments that we find of interest include the following: -

Southern Water: Policy 5 does not provide for proposals required to fulfil statutory infrastructure. Southern Water have suggested a form of words although an alternative might be to be consistent with Policy 3 i) d.

NHS: To the best of our knowledge there are no NHS assets in the Parish.

Historic England: We thank HDC and their partners for the extensive work carried out in preparing background papers and amendments such that the objection raised by Historic England has now been withdrawn.

We are grateful for the opportunity to review the draft plan in the light of the clarification note.

J C Hooper, Chair CNP Steering Group. Cowfold Parish Council

15th March 2021