

HOLME PLANNING Partnership

Mr Ian Barnes
Chairman
Limpley Stoke Parish Council
Limpley Stoke Village Hall
Middle Stoke
Limpley Stoke
BA2 7GF

4th September 2024

Dear Ian,

**Re: Draft Infill Policy
Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan**

Instructions

Further to receipt of our most recent instructions, I am pleased to confirm that we have now completed the extensive research exercise of reviewing other local and neighbourhood infill policies in England. As you will note from the schedule of documents reviewed and summarised in the spreadsheet to be sent under separate cover, this has been an extensive, but productive exercise. This action has allowed us to consider how other parishes and local authorities are dealing with the desire to limit infill development within the Green Belt, and to assess what may provide a more robust and defensible approach within the revised Neighbourhood Plan.

Proposed Policy Changes

Following a review of potential alternative infill definitions and policies we have developed a proposed revised draft infill policy for the Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan. Our view is that the policy changes as proposed in green below should help the Parish Council's to protect the character of the settlements, and to seek to limit additional infill developments, which the community consider to be unreasonable and unacceptable.

Current NP Policy:

“Planning and Development Policy

(a) Any development requiring planning permission within the Neighbourhood Plan area should reflect the Guidance contained in the Villages Design Statement.

(b) Applicants must demonstrate to the relevant Local Planning Authority how any planning application conforms to that Statement.

(c) Villages Design Statement

New developments: New developments must be mindful of and sensitive to the physical and environmental context of the site and its location. This includes the need for any development to be proportionate both to its site and in relation to its immediate neighbours.

Design: The design, contemporary or traditional, must be a positive addition to the rural environment reflecting the character of its setting and acknowledging the local built heritage. It must sit well in the landscape and not dominate it.

Detailing: The detailing of new development and changes to existing buildings must reflect the quality of craftsmanship and materials both of the area and of the specific location. Where possible, local and durable materials should be used which improve appearance with age. Any exterior lighting must minimise light pollution.

Car Parking: any development, whether for extensions or new housing, must provide for sufficient off-road car parking to avoid worsening on-road parking and congestion.

Heritage: The historic fabric of buildings should be preserved and repaired wherever possible (where buildings are ‘listed’ specialist advice should be sought).

a) The three Village Settlement Areas define the main built areas of the villages of Freshford and Limpley Stoke and are described as the Northern, Eastern and Southern settlements.

b) Development will be limited to infill sites within the Village Settlement Areas which are shown on Map 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan (‘the Plan’).

~~*c) Infill is the filling of a gap normally capable of taking no more than two houses. Infill development must be consistent with the policies set out in the Plan and preserve the openness of the Green Belt.*~~

Proposed Amendments to NP policy:

c) Within the settlement boundaries identified within the Neighbourhood Plan, limited infilling for housing will be permitted providing the applicant can demonstrate that the following criteria are met:

i) The site fronts directly onto a highway, and lies within an otherwise continuously built up frontage, with buildings on either side, and represents a small gap capable

- of accommodating development of a similar size, scale and plot width to the surrounding dwellings;
- ii) That the sites development does not extend the built frontage, does not result in ribbon development nor lead to a sporadic pattern of development;
 - iii) The proposal would not result in a material impact on the rural character of the area, and the development provides well-designed housing with a high standard of amenity that makes a positive contribution to the area;
 - iv) That the proposals will not result in any adverse effects on the privacy and amenity of residents of neighbouring properties;
 - v) Infill development will not be permissible where it results in detrimental harm to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets.
 - vi) Infill proposals will be expected to ensure that distinctive landscape and nature conservation features, such as trees, hedgerows and ponds, are retained; and
 - vii) Infill development must also be consistent will all other relevant policies contained with national guidance and the Development Plan, particularly in relation to the need to preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

New development failing to adhere to the above principles, and those proposed outside of the defined settlement boundary will be resisted.

We are aware that the proposed policy wording is extensively more detailed than the current policy, and may therefore need to be further revised. However, we are of the view that subject to the thoughts of the local authorities, that the policy proposed remains in compliance with and consistent with the provisions of the Development Plan.

It may well be that elements of the proposed wording can be removed from this policy given there could be perceived duplication with other policy issues including amenity, heritage, landscaping etc, but in our view all elements are important and need to be duly assessed when determining planning applications for infill development. These are clearly issues that can be discussed and addressed as any revisions to the Neighbourhood Plan progress, but the draft policy sets out our recommendations for potential changes and issues which could be included for consideration.

In our view the more tight limitations laid out within the above proposed policy wording changes including in relation to access, use of site frontage, built up frontage etc, could well have allowed the Parish Council to have taken a more robust point of view on some of the applications recently approved within the village, and whilst it may not have resulted in all applications being refused, it does set clearer parameters in relation to your expectations as to what can be deemed to represent infill development.

Next Steps

Once you and your colleagues have had chance to review and consider the proposals laid out above we'd be more than happy to chat through any additional queries you may have, and to discuss other potential changes to the draft policy wording.

In the interim however I can confirm that this now concludes our live instructions, and wonder if it's best to suggest that we liaise further in a few weeks time on potential next steps once we have further clarity on the policy position at a national level (which clearly remains a little up in the air but so far does not proposed changes to infill policy), and once you have had chance to digest and consider the proposals laid out above, and to determine how you wish to progress with the Neighbourhood Plan e.g. one total plan revision, creation of separate plans etc.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. Booth".

Rebecca Booth
BSc (Hons) MSc (Dist) MCIM
Managing Director