

Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan  
**Questions from Terrence Kemmann-Lane, Examiner**  
**10 October 2018**

To North Dorset District Council and Sturminster Newton Town Council  
Copied to Southern Planning Practice on behalf of Hall & Woodhouse Ltd.

**Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan Policies 4, 5 and 39**

1. As you will have been told, I am in the final stages of writing my report on the examination of the Sturminster Newton Neighbourhood Plan. I am extremely reluctant to raise a question at this late stage but, as I will explain, a recent document causes me to realise that, as I now think, representations have made incorrect policy references.
2. One of the last matters that I am dealing with in writing my report relates to the issues raised with regard to Policy 39 and land adjoining the Bull Tavern.
3. In the recent representations on behalf of Hall and Woodhouse Ltd (HWL), responding to the answers to my question EQ13, that were received by me just before going on my 3 week leave, the issue of revision to the allocations as Important Open or Wooded Area (IOWA) is raised. It is only since return from leave on Monday 8 October that I have been able to fully appraise its arguments. The point being made is that the 2003 Local Plan designation, relating to the land adjoining Bull Tavern as IOWA has been superseded by Policy 5 of the NP 'Other Important Open and Wooded Areas'. In fact I believe this reference to be wrong, as I will explain, but that is one of the matters that I wish to clarify.
4. In fact I believe that it is Policy 4 of the NP 'Local Green Spaces' that is intended to replace IOWA in the NP area. This can be seen in paragraph 4.2.13, referring to 'Local Green Spaces', where it is stated "The most valued spaces have been designated as Local Green Spaces ... and effectively replace the Important Open and Wooded Area policy areas...". I believe that it is this policy that the HWL representation should refer to. Any confusion is no doubt, in part at least, because of the similarity of title of Policy 5 'Other Important Open and Wooded Areas'.
5. This misunderstanding appears to have been shared by North Dorset District Council (NDDC) in its representation about Policy 5 that was the subject of its representation with the reference 'PDF page 31, Plan page 24, Policy 5', where it drew attention to the similarity of title with IOWA, and sought a small change in title to avoid confusion. I did not raise a question about this because I took it at face value and assumed that I was simply dealing with a policy name that might cause confusion (perhaps it has) and that a simple change would rectify the matter.
6. In its representation, HWL rely on Policy 4 (even though seeking to argue wrongly through Policy 5), and also point to the fact that NDDC

raised no objection to the superseding of IOWA. The other point to which I wish to draw attention from this representation can be briefly put as follows: *A 'Landscape and Visual Appraisal' was commissioned (March 2017) and submitted at regulation 16 stage. It was also submitted as part of a planning application: whilst it is accepted that the planning application is entirely separate from the NP, it is noteworthy that the NDDC officer endorsed this document as a robust review of the IOWA designations and found no reason to object to its conclusions, or the NP's conclusions (within Policy 4). It also made the point that Historic England was consulted at the early draft stage of the NP and made no comment on this policy allocation, but did comment on the NP as a whole as "A most impressive document in its depth and scope ... that draws extensively on an understanding of the historic character of the area ...."; and "this is the best of its kind that we have seen in the south west".*

7. Based on the above, I wish to have answers to the following:
- i) Am I right in my understanding of Policy 4, about which I have no representations, that it supersedes IOWA in the SNNP area?
  - ii) How does NDDC wish me to view its representation regarding Policy 5? In this regard it does seem to me that there is too close an association in terms of its submission title that may confuse it with IOWA.
  - iii) Please will NDDC confirm that it has no objection to Policy 4?
  - iv) Saved Policy 1.9 states "Important Open or Wooded Areas - Designated Important Open or Wooded Areas will be protected from development." SNNP Policy 4 is titled Local Green Spaces (a policy title that carries a presumption similar to Green Belt). It is not titled as Saved Policy 1.9 and therefore can it over-ride that designation and remove an area from the grip of saved Policy 1.9?
  - v) Have other Neighbourhood Plans in the District reviewed IOWAs, and if so by what designation?
  - vi) Please will NDDC clarify its attitude to the development covered by Policy 39 in the light of its development management officer's reported endorsement: *this document (the 'Landscape and Visual Appraisal' that was commissioned (March 2017) and submitted at regulation 16 stage) is a robust review of the IOWA designations and (she/he) found no reason to object to the conclusions in either document, (the Landscape and Visual Appraisal and the SNNP Local Green Space Policy)?*
  - vii) Any Party to which this document is sent may also let me have any other relevant comment or analysis regarding the questions that I raise.

I would be grateful for the swiftest of responses. If it is not possible to do so by Wednesday 24 October, please provide me with an explanation and a requested extension of time.

Terrence Kemmann-Lane  
Examiner

10 October 2018