

Cassop-cum-Quarrington Neighbourhood Plan Examination

30 March 2021

Dear Qualifying Body

Clarification Note from the Examiner to Cassop-cum-Quarrington Parish Council

Further to reviewing the Cassop-cum-Quarrington Neighbourhood Plan and supporting information, I am contacting Cassop-cum-Quarrington Parish Council (as Qualifying Body) in respect of the matters set out below.

Neighbourhood Planning Independent Referral Service (NPIERS) Guidance¹
Paragraph 1.11.4 states that:

“The Qualifying Body will normally be given the opportunity to comment on the representations made by other parties...This may be particularly important where the matters concerned have not been raised at Regulation 14 stage. The opportunity for the Qualifying Body to comment on representations could be incorporated within an independent examiner’s clarification note...”

Therefore, I confirm that there is an opportunity for Cassop-cum-Quarrington Parish Council to respond to me in respect of representations made during Regulation 16 consultation, should it wish to do so.

I would also be grateful for any assistance Cassop-cum-Quarrington Parish Council can provide in respect of providing brief responses to the requests below. If you wish to refer to evidence relating to the Cassop-cum-Quarrington Neighbourhood Plan, please note that this should only be evidence that is already publicly available.
Thanks.

Policy CCQ1 – I understand the clear community aspiration in respect of protecting rural character and providing for the separation of settlements.

Policy 6 of the Durham Local Plan sets out a supportive framework for sustainable development outside settlements, subject to the protection afforded by well-defined criteria. The requirements of Local Plan Policy 6 apply *“except where a settlement boundary has been defined in a neighbourhood plan.”* The Neighbourhood Plan does not define settlement boundaries.

Policy CCQ1 does not support any development in the Protected Rural Setting that would *“lead to a reduction in rural character...or diminish the role it plays in maintaining the separateness...”* Please can you point me to information in respect of why Policy CCQ1 is in general conformity with Local Plan Policy 6.

¹ NPIERS *“Guidance to Service Users and Examiners.”*

Also, the phrases “*lead to a reduction in rural character...or diminish the role it plays...*” have the potential to appear ambiguous, subjective and open to wide interpretation. Is there information you can point me to that provides clarity in respect of how these phrases should be interpreted, for example by a decision maker or an applicant ?

Also, re: the final sentence of Policy CCQ1, I find this sentence quite difficult to understand - is there any detail you can provide in respect of what “*proposal for built development connected to such uses that needs to be located within the PRS land*” might be ?

Also, is there information you can point me to in respect of a definition of the “*essential roles which the PRS land plays*” ?

Policy CCQ2 – I would be interested in the Parish Council’s views on the representations made in respect of proposed areas of Local Green Space LGS4 and LGS11.

Policy CCQ3 – Please can you point me to information in respect of how “*long term conservation*” should be interpreted (as opposed to just “*conservation.*”)

Policy CCQ4 – I have no specific queries on this Policy, but I would be interested in the Parish Council’s views on representations to the effect that the wording of the Policy appears subjective and open to wide interpretation.

Thank you.

There is no deadline in respect of this request for clarification, but if responses could be provided at the earliest opportunity, this will aid the timely conclusion of the examination process. Thanks.

Please do note that the above queries do not imply criticism of the Neighbourhood Plan but are simply to help my understanding of it, to support its examination against the basic conditions.

Thank you very much in advance for any information that you can provide.

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