

Hammerwich Neighbourhood Plan 2018- 2040

Initial Comments of the Independent Examiner

Prepared by

JOHN SLATER BA(Hons), DMS, MRTPI

John Slater Planning Ltd

29th June 2021

Introductory Remarks

1. As you will be aware, I have been appointed to carry out the examination of the Hammerwich Neighbourhood Plan. I have carried out my initial review of the Plan and the accompanying documents which I have been sent. I have just returned from my site visit to Hammerwich parish.
2. I have concluded that I should be able to deal with the examination solely based on the written material and it will not be necessary for me to call for a public hearing. However, there is a small number of matters that I need to ask for further submissions which seek clarification of what I have read in the plan or saw on my site visit. This is quite common in the examination process.

Regulation 16 Comments

4. I would firstly like to offer the Parish Council the opportunity to comment on the representations that were submitted as part of the Regulation 16 consultation. I am not expecting a response in respect of every point, just those that the Parish Council feels it wishes to respond to.

Strategic Policies

5. Can Lichfield District Council confirm which of its Local Plan policies, are for the purpose of the basic condition, the strategic policies that the neighbourhood plan has to be in general conformity with? Can it also set out the programme for the preparation of the new local plan?

Policy CF1 – Protecting and Enhancing Local Facilities

6. I note the desire of the policy to protect what are described as parish and community facilities but it appears that some of the items listed on Page 20 and 21 are actual community groups and local businesses rather than community premises which could be protected e.g. environment group, gardening guild, leisure classes.
7. Some of the items would be classed as local businesses, where the premises could change, say from one retail occupier to another without requiring planning permission, so the neighbourhood plan could not protect say a fish and chip shop or a butchers from changing to another use within Use Class E. The retail function could possibly be covered by Policy LEc1 but it would not stop a butcher's shop becoming a greengrocer.
8. I do not see that street lighting is a community facility, that could be protected by Policy CF1.
9. I invite the Parish Council to revisit the list so that it only relates to premises that are used as a community facility rather than the groups within them.

Policy T2- Parking Standards

10. What is the evidence that justifies that a garage smaller than 7m X 3m should not be counted as an off-street parking space?

Policy T3 – New Cycle routes

11. I would be grateful if the Parish Council could provide me with a plan, ideally based on an OS map that shows the route of the Lichfield Canal as it passes through the parish.

Policy LEnv 2 – Protecting Key Views across the Countryside to and from Hammerwich

12. I note that the policy seeks to protect valued views but I would like to know from which public viewpoints these views are actually enjoyed. The need to identify a viewpoint(s) is important when it comes in the future for a decision maker to be able to assess planning applications which affects the views. For example, when I visited St John the Baptist Church, the height of the hedges effectively prevented me from seeing the view to Lichfield Cathedral. I note that the photograph in the plan shows the view in the opposite direction. Is there a public viewpoint where the view can be appreciated? Ideally the Parish Council would illustrate each of the viewpoints with a photograph of the specific view that is to be protected.

Policy LEnv 3- Local Heritage Assets

13. A neighbourhood plan policy can designate non designated heritage assets. Does the Parish Council wish me to recommend the 3 properties set out in para 9.15 be identified as non-designated heritage assets and does Lichfield District Council have a view regarding their possible inclusion on the local list?

Concluding Remarks

14. I am sending this note direct to both Hammerwich Parish Council, and Lichfield District Council. I would request that the two parties' response to my questions should be sent to me by 12 pm on **13th July 2021** and also copied to the other party.

15. I would also request that copies of this note and the respective responses are placed on the Neighbourhood Plan's and also the Borough Council's website.

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Independent Examiner to the Hammerwich Neighbourhood Plan.

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