

Siddington Neighbourhood Development Plan

Examiner's Clarification Note

This Note sets out my initial comments on the submitted Plan. It also sets out areas where it would be helpful to have some further clarification. For the avoidance of any doubt, matters of clarification are entirely normal at this early stage of the examination process.

Initial Comments

The Plan provides a clear and concise approach for the neighbourhood area. The Vision and the objectives provide a context for the resulting policies (as displayed in paragraph 6.2.1). This is best practice. This is reinforced in the Justification sections associated with each policy.

The presentation of the Plan is excellent. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. In addition, the Plan makes good use of various high-quality maps and photographs.

Points for Clarification

A revised NPPF was published on 17 August 2026. It includes implementation arrangements for the examination of neighbourhood plans that had been submitted at that point. For clarity, any references in this note refer to the NPPF of December 2024 against which the Plan will be examined.

I have read the submitted documents and the representations made to the Plan. I have also visited the neighbourhood area. I am now able to raise issues for clarification with the Parish Council.

The comments made on the points in this Note will be used to assist in the preparation of the examination report and in recommending any modifications that may be necessary to the Plan to ensure that it meets the basic conditions. I set out specific policy clarification points below in the order in which they appear in the submitted Plan:

Policy S1

I looked carefully at the existing separation between Cirencester and Siddington during the visit. The supporting text provides a useful context to this matter.

To what extent has the proposed Siddington Gap been defined to ensure that it is consistent with the policies in the emerging Cotswold Local Plan 2043?

Could the policy be applied more generally to prevent coalescence without defining a physical Gap?

Policy S2

I noted that the Settlement Boundary reflects the distinctive layout of built development in the neighbourhood area.

Policy S3

The first part of the policy reads well.

Should the second part be supporting text?

I understand the relevance of the third part of the policy. However, is it necessary given that Part M of the Building Regulations addresses access into buildings?

Policy S4

The policy includes a comprehensive set of design principles. However, should the policy be applied proportionately especially as many of the development proposals which come forward in the Plan period will be minor or domestic in nature and will not affect all of the criteria?

Policy S5

I looked carefully at the Old Talland School of Equitation during the visit. I noted its condition and relationship to St Peter's Church.

I have a series of questions as follows:

- does the policy refer to the site as shown in Figure 21?
- in the first part of the policy does the Parish Council have any view about the development use that would be supported?
- what type of development is anticipated? This is not immediately clear as paragraph 6.11.2 comments about enabling development, whilst paragraph 6.11.5 comments about redevelopment.

Policy S6

I looked carefully at the proposed Canal Lane local green space (LGS) during the visit. I am satisfied that it meets the criteria for LGS designation as set out in the NPPF.

Is it necessary for the policy to comment about LGSs that are already designated (in the Local Plan)?

Policy S7

I looked carefully at the proposed Important Views during the visit. The policy takes a non-prescriptive approach to this matter.

Policy S8

I saw the importance of trees and hedges during the visit.

The first part of the policy takes a negative approach to this matter. As such I am minded to recommend that its initial element makes a positive statement to the effect that development proposals should respond positively to trees and hedges. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy S9

I note that paragraph 6.15.1 advises that Cotswold District Local Plan Policies EN14 and INF8 address requirements for flood prevention, flood alleviation, and water management infrastructure. It also comments that in addition to these policies and Section 14 of the NPPF (2024), the submitted Plan has developed its locally specific policy.

In this context, it would be helpful if the Parish Council would advise about which elements of the policy are locally-distinctive.

Policy S10

The format and content of this policy is very varied. S10A is focused on the development of new sustainable routes, S10B reads as an objective rather than as a policy, and S10C has a more traditional policy format. Please can the Parish Council expand on its approach in developing the policy.

In specific terms, is it appropriate to include projects 2a-d in part A of the policy given that that they are aspirational and dependent on third party land and funding? In this context are they deliverable within the Plan period?

Policy S11

I looked carefully at the identified community facilities during the visit. Their importance was self-evident.

In general terms the policy takes a positive approach and has regard to Section 8 of the NPPF. However, in both the second and third parts of the policy the approaches taken is qualified by the use of 'normally'. Is this intentional? If so, what purpose is served by its use given the criteria associated with the second part of the policy and the general reference to other policies in the Plan in the third part of the policy?

Representations

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

I would find it helpful if the Parish Council commented on the representations from:

- Gloucestershire County Council;
- The Bathurst Estate;
- Berkeley Leisure Group Ltd and the various residents on the proposed footpath between Tesco to Siddington Road (Policy S10A 2a); and
- Newland Homes Ltd and Knight Farming

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 5 November 2026. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It is intended to maintain the momentum of the examination.

If certain responses are available before others, I would be happy to receive the information on a piecemeal basis. Irrespective of how the information is assembled, please could it come to me directly from the District Council. In addition, please can all responses make direct reference to the policy concerned.

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Independent Examiner

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19 October 2026