
From:
Sent:
To: Neighbourhood Planning
Subject: COMMENTS for the Somerford Keynes Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)
Pre-examination Consultation (Regulation 16 Consultation)

From: Alan J Steeves-Booker
Gillian M Steeves-Booker

We support the general principles of the NDP, but question the statistical and ethical validity of certain aspects of Sections 4 and 8.2, as follows:

Section 4 (Community Strengths and Weaknesses), states that one of the principle attributes of the Parish is that it has a *"highly educated population"*. This is an ambitious claim which is not substantiated within Section 4, and it is repeated in Section 8.2 (Context and Background, Parish Level: Educational Attainment and Skills of Residents) where it is stated that *"residents of the Parish are very well educated, with only a small percentage (14%) of those aged 16 or over having no qualifications"*. A clear distinction is therefore drawn between the 14% group of unqualified persons and a larger group of residents (44% of the Parish) who have degrees. There is no mention of the educational status of the remaining 42% of the population, and it is therefore statistically incorrect to claim that the entire Parish is 'highly educated', since 56% (14%+42%) of the residents are outside that classification.

Section 8.2 also gives an unfortunate impression that a subjective value-judgement has been made about members of the unqualified 14% group, who nevertheless contribute to the Parish as a social entity. Emphasis is laid upon the employment status of members of the 44% degree-holding group: *"As a consequence, the majority of those in employment work in managerial, professional, and associated professional occupations"*. The total number of residents in employment is not given and there is no mention of workers in the 14% and 42% groups, some of whom may indeed have no qualifications but may nevertheless contribute specific and employable skills to society, and, equally, there may be others who have FE certificates, diplomas, apprenticeships etc., who may be employed in, for example, retail, catering, tourism, agriculture, mineral extraction, the Voluntary sector, freelance work, etc.

We suggest that the NDP should not simply use the educational achievements of 44% of the population to represent the whole Parish, but should instead provide a more balanced portrait of the varied skills and contributions of the entire community. We therefore suggest **1.** That the claim in Section 4 that the parish is *"highly educated"* should be omitted, or amended **2.** That the statistical baseline in Section 8.2 should if possible be expanded so that it sets out: **A.** The percentage of those residents without qualifications, with the number of those in this group who are in employment. **B.** The percentage of those with certificates, diplomas, and other Further Education qualifications, with the number of those in this group who are in employment. **C.** The percentage of those with degrees, with the number of those in this group who are in employment. If this information is not available, then, no matter how the educational attainments and skills of the residents are presented, the 14% group of residents who do not have qualifications should not be singled out as *"a small percentage."*

These comments are offered in the belief that the NDP should express the diversity of the Parish, irrespective of educational status. We hope that the amendments which we suggest will support the collective spirit of the Foreword to the NDP, which notes that *"Our Plan is made by the community for the benefit of community"*.

AJS-B
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