

CHAPTER 3.

3.0 ENVIRONMENT

3.1 OBJECTIONS by :

1266 English Heritage 2332 Northamptonshire CC.

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS

3.2 The absence of a policy stating that outline applications for development in Conservation Areas would not normally be acceptable.

3.3 The absence of a policy which safeguards landscape features as set out in Structure Plan Policy ENV2, (which identifies this as an area of concern), viz:

'Proposals for development should not normally intrude into landscape features or prominent views'.

THE ISSUES

1. Whether the Local Plan provides sufficient guidance to prospective developers in Conservation Areas ?

2. Whether or not the Local Plan follows the strategic guidance of the Structure Plan as it relates to the protection of landscape features and important views and, if not, whether an additional policy is required ?

ASSESSMENT

First Issue : Conservation Areas

3.4 I agree with the Council that the wording suggested by English Heritage is no more than a statement of administrative intent and, as such, it would not make appropriate policy. In paragraph 3.10 of the Local Plan the Council state that it will use the provisions of Article 7 of the Town and Country Planning Development Order 1988 to require the submission of detailed schemes to support applications for outline planning permission in Conservation Areas; this would seem to be the appropriate way to deal with proposals in such sensitive places but it is the Statutory Instrument 1995 No.419, The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995, Article 3 which now provides. However, coming as it does after a reference to the relatively marginal considerations of thatched roofs and service cables it does appear as something of an afterthought. This is surely not the intention and I therefore recommend a slightly different form of wording and arrangement of paragraph 3.10.

Second Issue : The Protection of Landscape Features

3.5 The District Council argue that the protection provided by Policy EN1 to the character and amenity of settlements, and to the landscape of the District, effectively interprets the strategic guidance of Structure Plan Policy ENV 2. I agree that it does, but so too does Policy GN2. The generalisation of Policy EN1 adds nothing to that latter policy while the alternative approach favoured by the County Council would add little to the understanding of either, unless the prominent views and the particular landscapes to be protected were identified. Clearly that would be a task of such proportions that the benefits would be outweighed by the cost of such an exercise. Notwithstanding that consideration, the outcome would still be the result of subjective judgements and just as likely to be challenged as the ad hoc ones which will be made under the provisions of Policies GN2 and EN1. I therefore make no recommendation for any modification to the Local Plan in respect of objection No 2332.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.6 That paragraph 3.10 of the Local Plan be modified, viz:

'In considering proposals for development, the Council will seek to ensure that they make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area or that they leave the character and appearance unharmed. The Council will use the provisions of Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 to require the submission of detailed schemes to support applications for outline planning permission in Conservation Areas. The Council is particularly keen to ensure that thatched roofs are retained on buildings within Conservation Areas and also to ensure that service cables are placed underground wherever possible'.

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POLICY EN1

IN CONSIDERING APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION AND OTHER CONSENTS TO CARRY OUT DEVELOPMENT, THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL HAVE REGARD TO THE NEED TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE CHARACTER AND AMENITY OF THE SETTLEMENTS AND LANDSCAPE OF THE DISTRICT.

[Proposed Changes : See Core Document No.12]

3.7 OBJECTIONS by :

474	Country Landowners Association	520	British
2264	DoE		Telecommunications plc
2387	DJC & CJ Orr		

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS

3.8 The policy, as drafted, is contrary to the advice in paragraph 3.8 of PPG12 as it outlines an administrative action rather than a specification for the granting of planning permission. The policy should be redrafted.

3.9 No account is taken of the advice in PPG7 which advocates a balanced approach to rural development and conservation. The policy should be reworded viz:

'In considering applications for planning permission and other consents to carry out development the District Council will have regard to:

- a. The need to preserve and enhance the character and amenity of the settlement and landscape of the District.
- b. The social and economic interests of those who live and work in the District.'

3.10 The policy is unduly restrictive and places an onerous requirement upon development proposals more commonly seen in policies relating to Conservation Areas. The policy should be reworded, viz:

'In considering applications for planning permission and other consents to carry out development, the District Council will have regard to the need for proposals to respect the character and amenity of the settlements and the landscape of the District.'

3.11 The policy, or the supporting text, should make clear the value placed on the historical content of the District and the judgement by the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments that elements, such as Borough Hill and the Burnt Walls enclosure, are especially worthy of preservation.

THE ISSUES

1. Whether the changes suggested by the objectors would more accurately reflect Government guidance in paragraph 3.5 of PPG12 ?
2. Whether the policy would more accurately reflect Government guidance by the inclusion of the suggested reference to social and economic interests at (b) ?
3. Whether the policy is overly restrictive, bearing in mind guidance contained in PPGs and in Structure Plan Policy ENV2 ?
4. Whether the Local Plan is deficient in recognising the value of the Schedule Ancient Monuments, and other historical sites, and in the measures proposed for their preservation ?

ASSESSMENT

First Issue : Policy Change

3.12 I deal with the objection from the DoE first because this has resulted in an agreed change to Policy EN1 to read, viz:

'Planning permission will normally be granted for development provided that the proposal respects the character and the amenity of the settlements and landscape of the District'.

3.13 Although this change would now satisfy the particular objection of the DoE, which saw the draft policy as a statement of administrative intent, I fail to see that the reworded policy adds anything to the Local Plan which is not already covered by Policy GN2. Criterion A of that latter policy relates to character and amenity while Criteria E - F relate to landscape features in far more precise terms than the proposed Policy EN1. The latter is otiose and none of the other changes suggested by objectors would make it otherwise. As a statement of the Council's approach to the protection of the environment it could find a place in paragraph 3.4 and in my consideration of objections related to that paragraph, I suggest a form of wording, (see paragraph 3.19 below).

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.14 That policy EN1 be deleted from the Local Plan.

3.15 OBJECTIONS by :

286 English Nature

3004 Northamptonshire CC

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS

3.16 Attempts at replacing habitats should be regarded as a last resort; the result will not harbour the same range of species as the original and the historical content of the site would be lost. The words, 'development proposals should retain trees, (etc)' in paragraph 3.4 should be substituted for the words, 'development proposals should seek to retain or replace as appropriate, trees, (etc).'

3.17 In the light of objection (2333) to Policy EN32 it would be wrong to remove the words, 'or replace', from the supporting text of paragraph 3.4 as neither the extant draft policy nor the supporting text would then conform with Structure Plan Policy ENV2.

THE ISSUE

1. Whether or not the Local Plan follows the strategic guidance of the Structure Plan and, if so, whether it should be changed to take account of the practical difficulties of replacing trees as a consequence of development ?

ASSESSMENT

3.18 The County Council is right to point out that the agreed change which would remove the words, 'or replace' from paragraph 3.4 would be contrary to the Structure Plan Policy ENV2. Apart from a question of conformity, of more importance is the practical effect of the rewording. In the reworded form it would remove any obligation to replace habitats which were destroyed by development; the clause, 'as well as adding to and enhancing', relates only to that which it were possible to retain and would have no effect if that were nil. English Heritage's objection is surely based on the precept that it would be better to retain than replace, but it would be unwise to suggest that the alternative would not be sought. I recommend a revised paragraph 3.4.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.19 That paragraph 3.4 of the Local Plan be modified, viz:

'The District Council is concerned to ensure that new development and redevelopment do not adversely affect the essential rural character of the District. In considering applications for planning permission and other consents to carry out development, the District Council will have regard to the extent the proposals respect the amenity and character of settlements and the landscape of the District. To this end, development proposals should seek to retain or replace, as appropriate, trees, hedges, woodlands, ponds and marshlands as well as adding to and enhancing these features with carefully designed landscaping features'.

3.20 **OBJECTION** by :

27 **NFU**

SUMMARY OF OBJECTION

3.21 Paragraph 3.5 should recognise that the design of some farm buildings would be dictated by the requirement for food safety, health and similar considerations, viz:

'However, it should be recognised that there will be some farm and other buildings in the countryside that require prior notification or planning permission that have severe limitations on the way they can be built because of the requirements of food safety, health and safety and other legislation'

THE ISSUE

1. Whether the change suggested by the objector would more accurately reflect the aims and objectives of the Local Plan ?

ASSESSMENT

3.22 I am with the Council in considering that the level of detail suggested by the NFU would be inappropriate in a statement of general guidance and administrative intent. The matters referred to are planning considerations which would be taken into account in the normal course of determining planning applications. In that respect the farming community would not be at any disadvantage compared with other interest groups who would rightly consider themselves to be disadvantaged if the suggested change were to be exceptionally incorporated in paragraph 3.5.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.23 That no modification be made to the Local Plan in respect of this objection.

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SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS

POLICY EN2

IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITIES, CERTAIN AREAS ARE DESIGNATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AS SPECIAL LANDSCAPE AREAS. IN THESE AREAS PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED THAT:

- A. IT COMPRISES AGRICULTURAL, FORESTRY, RECREATION OR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT; OR
- B. IT RELATES TO SETTLEMENTS WITHIN THESE AREAS. IN ASSESSING SUCH PROPOSALS, DETAILED DESIGN, MATERIALS, SITING AND IN PARTICULAR, LANDSCAPING, WILL BE MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE GRANTING OF PLANNING PERMISSION; OR
- C. IT RELATES TO THE APPROPRIATE RE-USE OF RURAL BUILDINGS WHOSE CHARACTER RENDERS THEM WORTHY OF RETENTION. SUCH CONVERSION PROPOSALS WILL NORMALLY ONLY RECEIVE PLANNING PERMISSION WHERE THE DISTRICT COUNCIL IS SATISFIED THAT THE DESIGN HAS HAD REGARD TO THE CRITERIA SET OUT IN POLICIES EN21 TO EN29 OF THIS LOCAL PLAN.

[Proposed Changes : See Core Document No.12]

3.24 OBJECTIONS by :

28	NFU	427	Alfred McAlpine Quarry
475	The Country Landowners' Association		Products Ltd.
918	Trustees W L Wakefield	2027	MAFF
2054	CPRE	2265	DcE

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS

3.25 The application of Criterion C, with its reference to 'character' could rule out the conversion of modern buildings which, nevertheless, would be capable of re-use either in agriculture or for other purposes, given the attachment of suitable conditions. The policy repeats Structure Plan Policy ENV4 and introduces uncertainty with the word, 'appropriate'. The test of the suitability of buildings falling within the ambit of the policy, viz, having a character worthy of retention, conflicts with the advice in PPG7 paragraph 2.15.

3.26 The policy does not fully take account of the advice in PPG7 and should include an additional criterion, viz:

- D. 'Any form of development appropriate to a rural area'.

3.27 A firmer and more positive application of the policy would result if the words, 'planning permission ... may be granted ...' were substituted for the words, 'planning permission ... will normally be granted ...' and if Criterion A were to read, 'It comprises suitable agricultural, forestry, recreation or tourism development, or ...'

3.28 The policy is too restrictive and does not take into account the potential for development of individual sites.

THE ISSUES

1. Whether the degree of restriction suggested by Criterion C and the inclusion of the suggested Criterion D would more accurately reflect Government guidance in PPG7 ?
2. Whether the policy would more accurately reflect Government guidance by the changes suggested by the CPRE ?
3. Whether the boundary of the SLA should be determined by the Council by consideration of the potential for development of various sites ?

ASSESSMENT

First Issue : Criterion C and the Suggested Criterion D

3.29 The Council's suggested change, which removes any reference to 'character', would appear to recognise the substance of the NFU's, DoE's MAFF's and the Country Landowners' Association's objections insofar that PPG7 Annex D does not distinguish between rural buildings of 'character' and those of more modern design. However, as both the policy and the suggested change neglect to include 'adaption' as an acceptable proposal the wording of the latter could be interpreted as precluding any change of use of a building which presently fails the tests of form, bulk and general design.

3.30 The advice in PPG7 Annex D regarding the re-use and adaption of rural buildings emphasises that the test of acceptability must be the effect on the visual amenity of the area, (references to an appropriate use therefore seem unnecessary). PPG7 also refers to the opportunity to improve the external appearance of buildings and it seems wrong, therefore, that such an opportunity might be spurned if adaption were not permitted. But, if an improvement were to result it would be wrong that it also be regarded as unacceptable because of the present form, bulk and general design of the building. I doubt that that is the Council's intention but it seems to me that to exclude adaption from the criterion, and not make clear that it is the result of re-use or adaption that is the consideration, is to run the risk of buildings remaining vacant with all the consequences for the amenity of the SLAs; I recommend on Criterion C accordingly.

3.31 As to Alfred McAlpines' objection I am with the Council in believing that the suggested additional Criterion D would undermine the status of the SLAs. Policy EN2 owes its place in the Local Plan to the recognition of SLAs special environmental qualities; the suggested Criterion D is singularly lacking in that recognition and is inappropriate on that score. I therefore make no recommendation for any modification to the Local Plan in respect of objection No 427.

Second Issue : CPRE's Suggested Change

3.32 I see no advantage in the CPRE's suggested change. The Council is rightly framing its policy statements in positive terms; the phrase, 'may be granted', introduces a note of uncertainty which would be contrary to that positive form of expression. I therefore make no recommendation for any modification to the Local Plan in respect of objection No 2054.

Third Issue : SLA Boundary Determinations

3.33 For reasons of scale and practicality, the initial designation of SLAs by LPAs must necessitate an essentially broad brush approach and boundaries determined in a like manner, usually by reference to natural or man-made features. The Council is right to point out in response to this objection that to determine boundaries on the basis of the potential of sites for development would be both time consuming and impracticable. I therefore make no recommendation for any modification to the Local Plan in respect of objection No 918.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.34 That Policy EN2 be modified by the substitution of Criterion C by the following, viz:

- C. IT RELATES TO THE RE-USE OR ADAPTION OF RURAL BUILDINGS PROVIDED THEIR FINISHED FORM, BULK AND GENERAL DESIGN ARE IN KEEPING WITH THEIR SURROUNDINGS.

And that the reference to other policies take account of the recommended modification to Policies EN21 to EN29 and be added as supporting text.

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3.35 OBJECTION by :

360 Flore Parish Council

SUMMARY OF OBJECTION

3.36 The exclusion from the designated SLA of the area of parkland bordered by the A45 to the north, the A5 to the west, (excluding buildings in Weedon), a line drawn from Flora Farm to Mill Farm to the east, and the District boundary to the south.

THE ISSUE

1. Whether the quality of the landscape of the area in question warrants the designation, SLA ?

ASSESSMENT

3.37 There is a sound case for reassessment given the quality of the landscape. The Council has argued elsewhere that it is not appropriate to amend the boundaries of the SLA as this is a strategic designation. I have responded that where the incompatibility of the designation and the land use is obvious, it would be sensible to do so. I think the same course of action is open to the Council where it considers there has been an omission. This is such a case.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.38 That the Council reassess the boundaries of the SLA in the light of the landscape quality of the objection land to the west of Flore.

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3.39 OBJECTION by :

888 Mr M Moser

SUMMARY OF OBJECTION

3.40 The area from Staverton Park Golf Course to the Royal Oak Estate has been so changed by development as to not warrant the designation, SLA.

THE ISSUE

1. Whether development on the objection land detracts from the landscape quality to such a degree as to warrant the removal of the designation, SLA ?

ASSESSMENT

3.41 There is a sound case for reassessment given the use of the objection land and the Council's own policies which do not permit some of the activities which presently take place. The Council has argued elsewhere that it is not appropriate to amend the boundaries of the SLA as this is a strategic designation. I have responded that where the incompatibility of the designation and the land use is obvious, it would be sensible to do so. This is such a case.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.42 That the Council reassess the boundaries of the SLA in the light of the uses of the objection land between Staverton Golf Course and the Royal Oak Estate.

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3.43 **OBJECTION** by :

1013 Mr M Spicer

SUMMARY OF OBJECTION

3.44 The area known as Drayton Lodge, lying between the A45, A425 and the former Staverton Road has been so changed by development as to not warrant the designation, SLA.

THE ISSUE

1. Whether development on the objection land detracts from the landscape quality to such a degree as to warrant the removal of the designation, SLA ?

ASSESSMENT

3.45 There is a sound case for reassessment given the use of the objection land and the Council's own policies which do not permit some of the activities which presently take place. The Council has argued elsewhere that it is not appropriate to amend the boundaries of the SLA as this is a strategic designation. I have responded that where the incompatibility of the designation and the land use is obvious, it would be sensible to do so. This is such a case.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.46 That the Council reassess the boundaries of the SLA in the light of the uses of the objection land at Drayton Lodge.

3.47 OBJECTIONS by :

1988 Mr Clifford Derwent (1989) 120 Staverton Parish Council

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS

3.48 Paragraph 3.8 should recognise that development in the Conservation Areas of villages located within the SLA are subject to development control exercised by Policies EN3 - EN5. Paragraph 3.9 gives no indication of the action to be taken by the Council as required by Circular 8/87; conservation is not appropriate for protecting landscape features or a substitute for TPOs.

3.49 Staverton should be among the villages and towns listed in paragraph 3.9 as containing Conservation Areas.

THE ISSUES

1. Whether paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9 of the Local Plan are misleading and incomplete and whether they would be better expressed if the suggested changes were incorporated ?
2. Whether Staverton should be included among the list of villages containing Conservation Areas ?

ASSESSMENT

First Issue : Paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9

3.50 I see little merit in the suggested change to paragraph 3.8. The designations of SLA and Conservation Areas are not mutually exclusive and there is therefore no reason to differentiate between them in the context of this paragraph. Paragraph 3.9 sets out to describe the general character of Conservation Areas and the protection they receive as a result of their designation; it does that quite adequately. I see no merit describing the administrative procedures associated with designation; the Council is aware of and makes reference to its statutory duties in this respect. I therefore make no recommendation for any modification to the Local Plan in respect of objection Nos 1988 and 1989.

Second Issue : Staverton

3.51 The Council recognises the omission of Staverton from the list and its suggested change would make good the error.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.52 That the Local Plan be modified by the addition of STAVERTON to the towns and villages listed in paragraph 3.9.

CONSERVATION AREAS

3.53 **OBJECTION** by:

514 Mr J W A Cox

SUMMARY OF OBJECTION

3.54 Objection to the boundary line of the conservation area in the village of Hellidon insofar as it affects the site of 'The Paddock' in the south-west corner of the village.

THE ISSUE

1. Whether, in fact, the conservation area boundaries have been changed to incorporate 'The Paddock' in Hellidon ?

ASSESSMENT

3.55 I note the assurance given by the Council that no change in Conservation Area boundaries has occurred between the consultation and draft versions of the Local Plan. Any discrepancies between the two versions is therefore an error in transposition or in the printing of the latter document which, no doubt, the Council will address before the adoption of the Local Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.56 That the Local Plan be modified to correct any discrepancy in the conservation area boundary in the vicinity of 'The Paddock', Helidon.

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POLICY EN3

PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED PROVIDED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT PRESERVES OR ENHANCES THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA. SPECIAL CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF VACANT SITES, OR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING BUILDINGS. A HIGH STANDARD OF DESIGN WILL BE REQUIRED IN RESPECT OF ALL SUCH PROPOSALS. IN ASSESSING APPLICATIONS FOR SUCH DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT, THE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD HAVE REGARD TO THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

[A - F.] as listed.

[Proposed Changes : See Core Document No.12 (Appendix 1)]

3.57 OBJECTIONS by :

213	Mr M J Eustace	442	Christ Church, Oxford
476	Country Landowners' Association	528	Mr Clifford Derwent
1264	English Heritage	2055	CPRE
2266	DoE	2330	Northamptonshire CC.

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS

3.58 The policy does not fully take into account the importance attributed to 'open spaces' in other sections of the Local Plan and should include an additional criterion, viz :

G. Development will not normally be allowed on areas of open space within conservation areas.

3.59 Development in Conservation Areas may be permitted for non domestic buildings; the use of the word, 'domestic' to describe the scale and character of permitted development is misleading therefore. Criteria B and F should be changed, viz :

B. Buildings should be closely related to the character of the Conservation Area in scale.

or

B. Buildings should reflect and compliment (sic) local scale and character.

and

F. Attention should be given to detailing in order to add interest in general to new buildings'

3.60 The words, 'planning permission ... may be granted', should be substituted for the words, 'planning permission ... will normally be granted', which carry a presumption for development. The words, 'The Council will seek to ensure that development within Conservation Areas preserves or enhances the character of the areas', should be substituted in place of the first sentence in the policy.

3.61 The policy uses a form of words which creates an inappropriate presumption in favour of development in Conservation Areas; the predicted granting of permission is misleading given that other policies relating to the Rural Areas in Chapters 4 and 5 would also apply to any application for development in those areas.

3.62 The policy lacks clarity. Criterion E is unnecessary as Building Regulations provide the legislation; Criterion F is irrelevant and contrary to paragraph 7.11 of PPG12. Both criteria should be deleted and the introduction reworded, viz : 'Development will only be considered if it has regard to the following principles'...

3.63 There may be cases where alternative materials would be acceptable in place of traditional materials. The words, 'as far as is practical', should be added to Criterion D.

3.64 The absence of a policy safeguarding the setting of important buildings, contrary to the guidance set out in Structure Plan Policy ENV2.

THE ISSUES

1. Whether the changes suggested by the objectors would more accurately reflect the aims and objectives of the Local Plan and Government guidance ?
2. Whether the use of non traditional materials in Conservation Areas would be acceptable ?
3. Whether or not the Local Plan follows the strategic guidance of the Structure Plan as it relates to the safeguarding of the setting of important buildings ?

ASSESSMENT

First Issue : Suggested Changes and Appendix 1

3.65 The Council's suggested changes contained in Appendix 1 to Core Document No 12 would seem to meet a number of the objections and insofar that it does I am content that this revised policy is an improvement on the draft. I therefore concern myself only with those objections which have not been met. The Council is right to resist superfluous additions and I consider that Mr Eustace's suggestion comes into that category. Open spaces in a Conservation Areas contribute to the character of the place and any development which threatened to encroach would be critically examined on that score as a matter of course; the suggested Criterion G is not required. I therefore make no recommendation for any modification to the Local Plan in respect of objection No 213.

3.66 The changes in the wording of the policy suggested by the CPRE and English Heritage are also not required. They add little to the understanding of the restrictions which apply in Conservation Areas and they introduce an unnecessary variation in the standard expressions employed throughout the Local Plan. There is no place in the Local Plan for policy by implication or by inference. Policies should be couched in straightforward and unambiguous terms and within a framework in which the presumption for development is a mainstay on which the appropriate conditions for and restrictions on development can be hung. Such is the case in Conservation Areas and throughout the District; the only exception to that general rule being where Green Belt policies apply but they are not a feature of this Local Plan. I therefore make no recommendation for any modification to the Local Plan in respect of objection Nos 1264 and 2055.

3.67 Having endorsed the Council's stance against 'superfluous' criteria I am surprised that the revised policy still contains Criteria E and F. No explanation of the inadequacies of the Building Regulations is offered by the Council to make a judgement in favour of the retention of Criterion E while the Council seem to suggest that Criterion F is required for the very small number of proposals which do not come forward with some form of landscaping scheme. Both these criteria add little to the policy and could be safely relegated to the supporting text wherein lies the greater opportunity for explanation.

Second Issue : Non Traditional Materials

3.68 The Country Landowners' Association's suggested change would weaken the policy, the thrust of which is to preserve the characteristics of an area in any new development. The aims of the policy and the suggested change are incompatible and the latter must therefore give way. I therefore make no recommendation for any modification to the Local Plan in respect of objection No 476.

Third Issue : The Setting of Buildings

3.69 The Council has also recognised the need to include a reference to the setting of important buildings and this now appears in the main clause of the policy. The statement should be unequivocal but its qualification by the ubiquitous adverb, 'normally', weakens it. I am aware that Structure Plan Policy ENV 2 is similarly qualified but contemporary opinion is against the use of the word. Other material considerations provide for a degree of flexibility in the application of the policy which I recommend in its abbreviated and unequivocal form.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.70 That Policy EN3 be modified, viz:

PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED PROVIDED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT PRESERVES OR ENHANCES THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA. SPECIAL CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF VACANT SITES AND THE REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING BUILDINGS. PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT SHOULD NOT INTRUDE INTO THE SETTING OF IMPORTANT BUILDINGS. DEVELOPMENT WILL ONLY BE FAVOURABLY CONSIDERED IF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET:

- A. DEVELOPMENT SHOULD REFLECT THE GENERAL ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER OF THE EXISTING BUILDINGS.
- B. BUILDINGS SHOULD BE CLOSELY RELATED TO THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA IN SCALE.
- C. ATTENTION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO DETAILING IN ORDER TO ADD INTEREST IN GENERAL TO NEW BUILDINGS.
- D. TRADITIONAL MATERIALS APPROPRIATE TO THE AREA SHOULD BE USED FOR WALLS, ROOFS AND ALL EXTERNAL JOINERY.

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POLICY EN4

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR NEW SHOP FRONTS AND SHOP FRONT ALTERATIONS IN CONSERVATION AREAS PROVIDED THAT THEY PRESERVE OR ENHANCE THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THOSE AREAS. SUCH DEVELOPMENT SHALL HAVE REGARD TO DESIGN GUIDANCE PREPARED BY THE DISTRICT COUNCIL.

3.71 OBJECTION by :

529 Mr Clifford Derwent

SUMMARY OF OBJECTION

3.72 The 'Shop Front Design Guide' is quite inadequate as an example of a 'positive scheme' for the enhancement of the Conservation Areas' ?

THE ISSUE

1. Whether the policy is inadequate, per se, or as part of the Council's proposed measures for Conservation Area enhancement.

ASSESSMENT

3.73 The objection refers to the 'Shop Front Design Guide' but this does not form part of the Local Plan and I make no comment on that aspect. Its suggested inadequacy will, no doubt, be a matter the Council will wish to address but not through the normal processes of this Plan making. As to the policy, I see no reason for change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.74 That no modification be made to the Local Plan in respect of this objection.

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3.75 **OBJECTIONS by :**

2056 CPRE (2057), (2058), (2059), (2060), (2061), (2062), (2063),
(2064), (2065), (2066), (2067), (2069), (2070), (2071).

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS

3.76 A firmer and more positive application of the policies would result if the words, 'planning permission ... may be granted ...', were substituted for the words, 'planning permission ... will normally be granted ...', in this policy and Policies EN7, EN11, EN16, EN20, EN21, EN22, EN23, EN24, EN26, EN27, EN32, EN33, EN43 and EN44.

THE ISSUE

1. Whether the changes suggested by the objector would more accurately reflect the aims and objectives of the Local Plan ?

ASSESSMENT

3.77 The wording of the CPRE's suggested change to Policy EN4, and to the others listed, is such that it would allow the Council to withhold planning permission even if the conditions set out the policy were met. The CPRE is concerned that principles may be compromised and present values eroded if the Council were not able to exercise its discretion in certain cases. I understand the CPRE's fears but the planning system could not operate successfully, nor fairly, if policies in the Local Plan were to be framed other than in positive and unambiguous terms. The suggested change would introduce an element of uncertainty and be contrary to the advice in paragraph 5.3 of PPG12 which advocates clear, succinct and easily understood Plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.78 That no modification be made to the Local Plan in respect of these objections.

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POLICY EN5

CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT WILL NOT NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR THE DEMOLITION OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS IN CONSERVATION AREAS AND PROPOSALS FOR ALTERATION OR REPAIR SHOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING.

[Proposed Changes : See Core Document No.12]

3.79 OBJECTIONS by :

521	BT plc.	530	Mr Clifford Derwent
2192	HBF (2193)	2267	DoE

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS

3.80 The policy, as worded, is inflexible; demolition may be appropriate in certain circumstances. Criteria under which Conservation Area Consent would be considered should be set out.

3.81 The presumption against the demolition of unlisted buildings could prejudice the objective of preserving and enhancing Conservation Areas. The removal of unsightly or uncharacteristic buildings could be a positive step. The policy should be reworded, viz :

‘Planning permission would not normally be given for the demolition of unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas which are important to the character of the area and proposals for the alteration or repair should be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building’.

3.82 The ‘important’ unlisted buildings in the Conservation Areas should be identified in the Local Plan.

3.83 The policy is more restrictive than the supporting text which refers to unlisted buildings which are ‘important’ to the character of a Conservation Area. The policy should be changed to include that qualification.

THE ISSUE

1. Whether the changes suggested by the objectors would more accurately reflect the aims and objectives of the Local Plan. And, whether, in not identifying ‘important’ buildings in Conservation Area, the Local Plan fails to provide sufficient guidance for the sensible planning of the use of land and buildings ?

ASSESSMENT

3.84 The Council's proposed change set out in Core Document No.12 meets most of the objections insofar that it is expressed positively, it allows a degree of flexibility in its application and it contains criteria against which proposals for Conservation Area consent could be judged. It does not indicate which are considered to be 'important' buildings or where they are located but such detail would be inappropriate in a Local Plan. These are matters to be judged on an ad hoc basis and in the context of particular applications and I am content, therefore, that the suggested change be, incorporated in the Local Plan; I recommend accordingly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.85 That Policy EN5 be modified, viz:

CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT WILL BE GRANTED FOR THE DEMOLITION OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS PROVIDED THAT:

- A. THEY ARE NOT IMPORTANT TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA.
- B. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE IS AN ENHANCEMENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA. PROPOSALS FOR ALTERATION OR REPAIR SHOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING AND THE CONSERVATION AREA.

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POLICY EN6

WHERE DEMOLITION IS TO BE FOLLOWED BY REDEVELOPMENT, CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT MAY BE WITHHELD UNTIL ACCEPTABLE PLANS FOR THE NEW DEVELOPMENT HAVE BEEN APPROVED AND A CONTRACT LET. IF APPROVED, THE TIMING OF THE DEMOLITION WILL BE STRICTLY CONTROLLED.

3.86 OBJECTIONS by :

443	Christ Church, Oxford	531	Mr Clifford Derwent
1265	English Heritage	2268	DoE

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS

3.87 The policy, per se, sets out an administrative action which is already covered by legislation. The policy should be downgraded to supporting text.

3.88 In the interests of a sensible understanding of the policy, the last phrase of the first sentence should be reworded, viz :

'... plans for the new development have been approved and a contract for the works entered into'.

3.89 There is an absence of any 'positive schemes' involving measures that the Council propose for the preservation or the enhancement of Conservation Areas.

3.90 The last sentence of paragraph 3.13 implies the loss of an 'important' building or open space and is therefore in conflict with the intent of paragraph 3.12. The former should be deleted.

THE ISSUES

1. Whether the change suggested by the objector to supporting text would more accurately reflect Government guidance in PPG12. And, whether the suggested textual changes would more accurately reflect the aims and objectives of the Local Plan ?

2. Whether the Plan is deficient in the absence of, or reference to 'positive schemes' ?

ASSESSMENT

First Issue : Government Guidance

3.91 I am with the DoE in regarding Policy EN6 as being a statement of an administrative action which should be relegated to supporting text. The Council's argument that the policy states the circumstances under which Conservation Area consent might be withheld does not stand scrutiny. It is a statement full of qualifications, one which cannot be expressed in positive terms and one not directly related to land use. As a supporting statement it

would be a valuable guide to developers in certain circumstances and could be incorporated into a revised paragraph 3.13, taking on board the suggested changes by Christ Church, Oxford and English Heritage. I therefore recommend accordingly.

Second Issue : Suggested Changes

3.92 The 'deficiency' identified by Mr Derwent is not one that I recognise. It would be ambitious of the Council to plan for 'positive schemes', so early in the Local Plan's life and impracticable too. The Local Plan cannot be the vehicle for promoting every possible worthwhile scheme; its purpose is as set out in its introductory paragraphs and I am content that a relegated Policy EN6 makes a worthwhile contribution in that context.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.93 That Policy EN6 be deleted.

3.94 That paragraph 3.13 be modified, viz;

'Proposals for redevelopment sometimes take a considerable time to implement. The demolition and clearance of sites before a new scheme has been improved or implemented could lead to the situation where an unsightly area in a Conservation Area is created and left for some time. The opportunity for a sympathetic replacement scheme may be lost if the designer does not appreciate the scale and form of the original building. Where demolition is to be followed by redevelopment, conservation consent may be withheld until acceptable plans for the new development have been approved and a contract for the works entered into. If approved, the timing of the demolition will be strictly controlled'.

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POLICY EN7

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS PROVIDED THAT THEY DO NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT IMPORTANT OPEN SPACES, TREES, STREET SCENES AND VIEWS INTO AND OUT OF THE CONSERVATION AREAS.

3.95 OBJECTIONS by :

477	Country Landowners' Association	532	Mr Clifford Derwent
562	Crick Parish Council		

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS

3.96 The word 'adversely' needs to be qualified; any development could have an adverse effect and, however minimal, would thereby be judged incompatible with the aims and objectives of the Plan. The words, 'would not have a significant adverse effect', should be substituted therefor.

3.97 The distinction needs to be drawn between 'open space' in Conservation Areas, where it is closely related to the settings of buildings, and 'open land' in Policy RES 6 of the Structure Plan, which is important to the form and character of villages. Confusion is possible in the reference to 'open space' in paragraph 5.101d of Policy HS32.

3.98 The Local Plan should bring forward proposals for Conservation Areas; The core area of Crick merits such a designation.

THE ISSUES

1. Whether the change suggested by the objector would more accurately reflect the aims and objectives of the Plan ?
2. Whether there is a lack of conformity in the references to 'open space' and 'open land' in the Structure Plan and the Local Plan ?
3. Whether the Local Plan is the appropriate vehicle for the designation of Conservation Areas ?

ASSESSMENT

First Issue : Suggested Change

3.99 I agree with the Council that the suggested change by the Country Landowners' Association would have the effect of weakening Policy EN7 and the consequences of development under such a policy could be damaging. I therefore make no recommendation for any modification to the Local Plan in respect of objection No 477.

Second Issue : Open Space

3.100 Mr Derwent's objection seems to relate more to the difference between the nomenclature of the Structure Plan and the Local Plan, rather than to any inconsistency in the latter. Indeed, its consistency is demonstrated by the references he quotes. The objection does, however, draw attention to matters considered under Policy EN3 where it was argued by the Council that open space was synonymous with the character of the Conservation Area and that an additional criteria making reference to open spaces was not required. I agree with that argument and therefore see little value in Policy EN7 which, in effect, simply relates to such characteristics. The objections to the policy do not suggest its deletion but I make that a specific recommendation.

Third Issue : Designation of Conservation Areas

3.101 The Council is right to point out that procedures for the designation of Conservation Areas exist and that the Local Plan is not the vehicle for such procedures. I have no doubt that if a case for the designation of the centre of Crick can be made it will receive due and proper consideration. I therefore make no recommendation for any modification to the Local Plan in respect of objection No 562.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.102 That the Local Plan be modified by the deletion of Policy EN7.

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LISTED BUILDINGS

POLICY EN8

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT WILL NOT NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR THE DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS LISTED AS BEING OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST. ANY WORKS TO SUCH BUILDINGS THAT REQUIRE LISTED BUILDING CONSENT, MUST PRESERVE THEIR CHARACTER AND THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE KEPT IN A GOOD STATE OF REPAIR.

[Proposed Changes : See Core Document No.12]

3.103 OBJECTION by :

2269 DoE (2270).

SUMMARY OF OBJECTION

3.104 The policy is already covered by existing legislation; the last part of the last sentence is an administrative action. The policy should be down graded to supporting text. Paragraph 3.18 is in contravention to the Treaty of Rome in its reference to 'local' and 'materials'; the terms should be deleted.

THE ISSUE

1. Whether the changes suggested by the objector would more accurately reflect the legal requirements and the aims and the objectives of the Local Plan ?

ASSESSMENT

3.105 I am sure that there is a danger in the DoE's approach, exemplified by its objection to this policy, of producing a Local Plan which would be an unsatisfactory document. Whilst references to extant legislation may be unnecessary there is an obligation, it seems to me, to produce a Plan which can be judged in the round. Policy EN8 and Policy EN9 together represent an honest attempt to square the circle of Listed Buildings policies and even with their faults I prefer it to the DoE approach, which would leave some obvious sectors uncovered. The proposed change meets the objection about the administrative nature of the last sentence in the policy and I am content to recommend the incorporation of that sentence in paragraph 3.18.

3.106 If, as the Council contend, the reference to local style and materials is not intended to be in contravention of Article 30 of the Treaty of Rome, I think it could be better expressed and I recommend accordingly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.107 That Policy EN8 be modified by the deletion of the last sentence.

3.108 That paragraph 3.18 be modified by the addition of the following as the penultimate sentence, viz :

'Any works to such buildings that require listed building consent, must preserve their character and the Council will seek to ensure they are kept in a good state of repair'.

3.109 That the final sentence of paragraph 3.18 be modified, viz :

'The District Council is particularly concerned to ensure that thatched roofs are retained on Listed Buildings and that re-thatching utilises the correct local style and local natural materials or their equivalent'.

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POLICY EN10

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL NORMALLY REQUIRE THAT LONG STRAW THATCH WHERE CURRENTLY IN USE ON LISTED BUILDINGS, EITHER AS A PRIMARY ROOF COVERING OR AS A REMNANT COAT UNDER A LATER COVERING, SHALL BE RETAINED BY REPLACEMENT, REPAIR OR REINSTATEMENT WHERE PRACTICAL.

3.110 **OBJECTION** by :

361 Flore Parish Council

SUMMARY OF OBJECTION

3.111 The insistence on long straw thatch is unreasonable insofar that it is prohibitively expensive and rare, the Council should 'normally recommend' its use. Norfolk Reed is an acceptable substitute both in its quality and appearance.

THE ISSUE

1. Whether the requirement for long straw thatch is an unreasonable condition to incorporate in Policy EN10 ?

ASSESSMENT

3.112 I am obliged to the Council for drawing my attention to the Secretary of State's considered opinion on a case involving these materials that there was a need to ensure the survival of these traditional thatching methods and I see no reason to differ in this instance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.113 That no modification be made to the Local Plan in respect of this objection.

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POLICY EN12

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL PREPARE AND IMPLEMENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS SCHEMES, FOR:

- A. DAVENTRY CONSERVATION AREA,
- B. VILLAGE CONSERVATION AREAS,
- C. VILLAGES WHICH ARE PARTICULARLY AFFECTED BY TRAFFIC AND PARKING PROBLEMS,

and

- D. VILLAGES WHERE THE COMPLETION OF BYPASSES AND THE CONSEQUENT REDUCTION IN TRAFFIC FLOWS PRESENTS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS.

[Proposed Changes : See Core Document No.12]

3.114 OBJECTIONS by :

563 Crick Parish Council 2271 DoE

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS

3.115 The policy is no more than a loose agenda of administrative actions proposed; it fails to identify the villages to which it would apply nor proposals which would give it substance, such as traffic management and calming measures which would reduce the speed of traffic through Crick. In its present form it should be reduced to text but could be written as policy if firm proposals exist ?

THE ISSUE

1. Whether the policy provides the necessary guidance and information to justify its status.

ASSESSMENT

3.116 By suggesting the policy be reduced to supporting text the Council apparently have no specific proposals for environmental improvements and it recognises the logic of the objections. I am similarly persuaded and I recommend accordingly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.117 That the Local Plan be modified by the deletion of Policy EN12 and by the substance of the policy being incorporated in the supporting text.

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GREEN WEDGES AND GREEN LINKS

POLICY EN13

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT IN GREEN WEDGES AS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AND THE PROPOSALS MAP (DAVENTRY INSET) PROVIDED THAT IT WOULD NOT:-

- A. BE DISCORDANT WITH THE PREDOMINANTLY OPEN/GREEN NATURE OF A GREEN WEDGE BY REASON OF APPEARANCE OR USE; OR
- B. REDUCE THE SEPARATION BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS: OR
- C. IMPAIR ACCESS TO A GREEN WEDGE.

3.118 OBJECTIONS by :

131	Capel House Pproperty Trust Ltd. (132)	304	Christ Church, Oxford
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SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS

3.119 The Green Wedge policy provides an additional level of restraint on development outside settlement limits on land which is considered to be vulnerable to develop pressures. It is arbitrary, unnecessary and at best a development control device which is not based on any qualitative assessment of the value of the landscape, per se.

3.120 The objection site at Eastern Way is considered to be suitable for residential development, it does not serve any Green Wedge policy function.

THE ISSUE

1. Whether the Green Wedge and Green Links policies are unnecessary and together simply provide an arbitrary means of development control for the Plan period or, whether they provide longer term protection for areas which could serve a variety of important functions ?

ASSESSMENT

3.121 The main task of considering objections to Policy EN13 falls to my colleague Mr Osborne and I am in agreement with his conclusions especially with regard to the first, second and third issues he identifies. The essence of objection No. 304 relates to the designation of land off Eastern Way as Green Wedge and I therefore address that issue in conjunction with objections Nos. 305 and 310 where it is proposed for housing development. The objection to the policy, (and Policy EN14), however, does provide the opportunity to address an aspect of the Local Plan with which I am not at ease.

3.122 I note at paragraph 3.27 of the Local Plan the value attached to Green Wedges and the contention that they give identity to, or retain the identity of settlements and landscape features. I recognise the importance of identifying the natural and the development structure of settlements and of ensuring that development is located whereby those identifying features are enhanced and reinforced. I endorse any policy with those objectives and I am with the Council in the principle of Green Wedges. My unease, therefore, stems from the fact that during the inquiry the Council frequently stated that the Green Wedge designation was a 'residual' designation, ie. that it was subordinate to other calls on the use of land, notably land for housing. And, moreover, that the inquiry revealed that the Local Plan provides no sense of the direction or the limits of development beyond the Plan period.

3.123 The task that I face in considering the objections to the Housing policies leaves me in no doubt about the importance of meeting the Structure Plan requirements for housing land. I would approach that task more easily if the Local Plan gave a clearer guide to the future shape of Daventry, but it does not. My understanding of the Council's position is that development to the south and the west of the Town is precluded by the SLA designation. Borough Hill would seem to form a natural barrier to development in the east unless the Burnt Walls allocation is to be regarded as the forerunner for a more easterly expansion; [I deal with that proposition under Policy HS7 below]. Given those formidable restrictions future growth could only be accommodated in a northerly and northwesterly direction. But the assertion by one objector that the natural growth of the town was in a northward direction was neither denied nor was it confirmed by the Council.

3.124 In their present form, and with their promise of some permanence, the Green Wedge policies confuse unless they are not as they purport but simply a development control tool to be reshaped at the next Local Plan review, or as the occasion demands. They could be a more valuable component of the Local Plan than a temporary block on development but I detect an equivocal approach in the Green Wedge designation which requires a resolution for the better understanding of the Local Plan.

3.125 Of the areas presently designated there are parts which could be described as 'wedges' between the built-up areas of Daventry and which are very worthy of long-term protection because of their amenity value described in paragraph 3.27 of the Local Plan. There are other elements which are not so worthy but, nevertheless, where development should be restricted during the Plan period in order to secure the orderly future development of Daventry and to provide a buffer between Daventry and other settlements. I am strongly of the view that a distinction should be made between these different areas and their functions.

3.126 A qualitative analysis would identify the former and the designation 'Green Wedge' should be conferred on that basis, (the Country Park and its links with the open countryside would seem to be prime candidates). The latter I suggest should be termed, 'Areas of Restraint' and that the designation of these areas would be more suited to the residual approach

following a review of the longer term needs for the town's development and the need to maintain the separate identities of adjoining settlements. [I suggest a suitable wording for a policy designating such areas]. It is not for me to make these judgements but I shall approach the task of considering the objections to the housing and other policies with those distinctions in mind. I commend them to the Council for its consideration. My views apply equally to the Northampton area but different considerations may apply and the Council will wish to consider the above observations alongside my colleague's recommendations for that area.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

3.127 That the Council consider designating 'Green Wedges' together with and 'Areas of Restraint', the former for long term protection on the basis of its contribution to the amenity value of the rural fringes of Daventry, the latter on the basis of ensuring the orderly development of Daventry in the longer term and the need for a buffer between adjoining settlements.

3.128 That the Council consider the following as a policy for 'Areas of Restraint', viz:

LAND IN THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS (AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP) IS DESIGNATED AS AN 'AREA OF RESTRAINT' WHERE THERE WILL BE A GENERAL PRESUMPTION AGAINST DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD CHANGE ITS NATURE AND CHARACTER.

And the following as the supporting text, viz:

'There are a number of locations on the fringes of Daventry and Northampton which are not allocated for development. Some may and some may not justify long-term protection but in both cases their general character should be protected for their amenity value and in order to secure the proper development of the area'.

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3.129 OBJECTION by:

6 British Waterways

SUMMARY OF OBJECTION

3.130 The extent of the Green Wedge shown on the Daventry Inset of the Proposals Map, together with housing allocation HS6a, provides too little space and facilities for the users of Drayton Reservoir.

THE ISSUE

1. Given the progress of development on the site of HS6a, whether the Green Wedge boundary as drawn is too restrictive ?

ASSESSMENT

3.131 The Council's assurance that an appropriate area is maintained between the reservoir and the residential area together with the provision of a car park for visitors meets this objection and on that basis I am content to recommend accordingly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.132 That no modification be made to the Local plan in respect of this objection.

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3.133 OBJECTION by:

42 Molyneux Lucas Planning

SUMMARY OF OBJECTION

3.134 The Green Wedge designation should be extended to incorporate the HS6c (Middlemore) allocation, Borough Hill and all of the HS7 (Burnt Wells) allocation. By the same token the allocation HS6b should remain as open countryside to act as a buffer between Daventry and Welton.

THE ISSUE

1. Whether, in the light of the recommendations above and those relating to the various housing allocations, there are sound planning reasons for extending the Green Wedge designation to the extent proposed ?

ASSESSMENT

3.135 I have indicated above, (paragraph 3.127), the whole question of Green Wedge designation should be addressed on the basis of my recommendations. Any changes in those designations would require the Council's acceptance or not of those recommendations before considering the import of any recommendations relating to specific sites, such as HS6(b), HS6(c) and HS7. It will be for the Council to weigh the two and I therefore make no recommendation to modify the Local Plan in respect of this particular objection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.136 That no modification be made to the Local Plan in respect of this objection.

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3.137 **OBJECTION** by:

564 Crick Parish Council

SUMMARY OF OBJECTION

3.138 The absence of a 'Green Wedge' between Rugby and the villages of Crick, Barby and Kilsby to counter the effect of the major development proposals in the north western sector of the District which could fundamentally alter the settlement pattern of the area.

THE ISSUE

1. Whether the effect of the proposals for development to the west of the M1 motorway would have the effect of altering the settlement pattern in this part of the District and, if so, whether the Green Wedge concept could have an application in the circumstances ?

ASSESSMENT

3.139 The Council is right to point to the administrative difficulties of the area where responsibility is shared. And as it is my own view that the Green Wedge policy should have a more specific function than that outlined in the Local Plan, it would be unsuitable for the application envisaged by the objector. However, there is no doubt that the development of the Daventry International Railway Freight Terminal, (DIRFT), proposals will have a fundamental effect on the character of the countryside around Crick, Barby and Kilsby and the Council may wish to consider whether those settlements could benefit from my suggested 'Area of Restraint' policy. It seems to me that given the upheaval that DIRFT will bring, the inhabitants of those villages would welcome the protection that such a designation might provide.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.140 That the Council consider whether the application of the suggested 'Area of Restraint' policy would meet Crick Parish Council's objection No.564.

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