

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE APPLETON ROEBUCK & ACASTER SELBY NEIGHBOURHOOD  
PLAN**

EXAMINER: ROBERT YUILLE MSc DipTP MRTPI.

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Examination Ref: 03/RY/ARASNP

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Dear Mr Ridley

One of my tasks in examining the Appleton Roebuck and Acaster Selby Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) is to consider whether it makes a contribution to sustainable development. The contribution that the neighbourhood plan area should make to sustainable development is, in broad terms, defined in the Selby District Core Strategy, **Policy SP2** of which identifies Appleton Roebuck, along with 17 other settlements or groups of settlements, as a Designated Service Village which is considered to have some scope for additional residential development and small scale employment. Core Strategy **Policy SP5** indicates that some 1,780 new housing allocations will be needed in Designated Service Villages. That policy goes on to state that specific sites for such uses will be identified through the Site Allocations part of the Local Plan. **Policy SP13** makes a similar statement about employment land. The emerging *Sites and Policies Local Plan - PLAN Selby* will allocate sites in Designated Service Villages.

In such circumstances, it is perfectly legitimate for the Plan to take the approach that it does and not to allocate any housing or employment sites but to leave such matters to the emerging plan. However, the Plan cannot contain policies which would frustrate or pre-empt the emerging plan in seeking to make provision for sustainable levels of development. The District Council in its letter sent under cover of an e mail dated 28 April 2017 makes the point that the definition of small scale as being under 5 units, as suggested by a representor and favoured by the Parish Council, would pre-empt the emerging plan in its task of allocating sites in villages such as Appleton Roebuck. This is a matter I am considering at present.

I would, however, like to ask the Parish Council and the District Council to consider the question of whether **Policy DBE 4**, which deals with drainage and flood prevention, could be seen as similarly pre-empting the emerging plan. Both the Framework (paragraphs 100 to 104) and **Policy SP15** of the Core Strategy seek to steer development towards land which is least likely to flood. They do not, however, rule out the possibility that there will be situations in which development will need to take place in areas of flood risk provided, to use the words of **Policy SP15**, it can be made safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. **Policy DB 4** of the Plan, on the other hand, takes a somewhat more restrictive approach stating categorically that '*New development beyond that permitted should not*

*take place in those areas defined as flood zone 2 and 3.* It may be that there are sufficient, suitable sites on land within Flood Zone 1 in the parish for any housing and employment land which the emerging plan may allocate at Appleton Roebuck but I have seen no evidence of this. Does the Parish Council or District Council have such evidence?

Incidentally I assume the reference in section 4.3.4 of the Plan to Flood Zone 1 being most at risk is an error and it should read least at risk.

On a similar theme, I note that **Policy ELH 1** of the Plan seeks to safeguard the best and most versatile agricultural land except in exceptional circumstances where the benefits to the community are shown to outweigh the harm. In other words, it requires a balance to be struck between the merits of safeguarding the best and most versatile agricultural land and any benefits which might flow from developing such land. Once again, I am concerned to establish whether or not this policy would pre-empt the emerging plan in its search for suitable housing and employment sites in Designated Service Villages such as Appleton Roebuck. Can the Parish Council confirm that if, in preparing the emerging plan, it were found that there was a lack of suitable and sustainable housing or employment sites on lower grade agricultural land then this would amount to an exceptional circumstance?

While we are dealing with the question of best and most versatile agricultural land I note this is defined in **Policy WB2** of the Plan as grades 1 and 2 land. In the Glossary of the Framework it is defined as grades 1, 2 and 3a. Is there a reason why the Plan departs from the Framework in this respect?

Turning to other matters, the Plan contains a very useful Local Green Space Assessment at appendix A2. However, I wondered if the sizes given for the various sites which were assessed are accurate in all instances. *All Saints' churchyard and adjoining field* are given as being 0.5h in extent while *Daffy Field*, which on plan and on site looks to be a similar size, is given as being 2h in extent. Is there a mistake here? I also note that the decision was taken not to designate the *'Ridge and Furrow' field adjacent to Daw Lane* because it was too extensive. However, that site is also given as being 2h in extent – the same as Daffy Field which it is proposed to designate. Can the Parish Council explain this apparent inconsistency?

Finally, I note that in section 4.4 of the Plan that reference is made to a full consideration of green infrastructure corridors being found in the evidence base. Where will I find this?

Can I have the response from both the District and Parish Councils by 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017 please?

In the interests of transparency, may I prevail upon you to ensure a copy of both this letter and the respective documents (in due course) are placed on the relevant websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Your sincerely

*Robert Yuille*

Examiner