

BRIXTON PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN, 2014-2034

MODIFICATION PROPOSAL (including statement on the significance of the proposed modification)



December 2022 (Revised May and August 2023)

Introduction

Brixton Parish Council (BPC) proposes to modify the 'Made' Brixton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (BPNP), 2014 – 2034 ('the Plan'). The amendment relates to policies on the Green Corridors and the Brixton Open Gap (BPNP Policies Env4 and Env6 respectively) by modification to Env Map 3.

It is considered that this is a material modification which, in the view of BPC, is not so significant or substantial as to change the intentions of the Plan. It is regarded as a clarification and strengthening of the Plan. The modification can be made without a referendum in accordance with the 2012 Regulations amended by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2017 No. 1243.

Regulation 14 of the Regulations requires:

'in relation to a modification proposal, a statement setting out whether or not the qualifying body consider that the modifications contained in the modification proposal are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the neighbourhood development plan which the modification proposal would modify, giving reasons for why the qualifying body is of this opinion'

BPC voted unanimously in agreement of the modification at the full council meeting on 29th June 2022.

1.0 Background

1.1 The parish of Brixton, situated within the South Hams, is a small rural community, centred on the village of Brixton. It borders the City of Plymouth to the west and the current new town development of Sherford to the north, where over 600 of the planned 5,500 houses have been completed. Sherford falls mainly within the parish of Brixton.

1.2 Brixton village is thus in a unique position in the South Hams of having a major city on one side and a new town under construction on another. Further expansion of either of these two settlements has the potential to threaten the rural character of the village.

1.3 The village is divided by the main A379, the primary route between Plymouth and the South Hams, used by those commuting from the South Hams into Plymouth,

Plymouth residents travelling to the beaches and countryside of the South Hams, commercial vehicles and tourists.

1.4 The Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) makes no indicative housing allocation for the villages including Brixton which are within the South Devon AONB. *“This is in acknowledgement of the great weight that should be given to conserving their landscapes and scenic beauty”*. (JLP para 5.165)

1.5 The adopted Brixton Parish Neighbourhood Plan (BPNP), developed between 2015 and 2019 and approved by 95 percent of the local community at referendum, sought to address the community’s very real concerns of encroaching development. The BPNP highlights the vital importance of a clear distinction between Plymouth and Brixton, namely by the protection of the Green Corridor (Policy Env 4) from the Plymouth boundary at Elburton to the start of the village settlement and the maintenance of a distinct and well-defined Brixton Open Gap between Brixton and Sherford (Policy Env 6).

1.6 The intention of Policy Env 4 is that the Green Corridor will be maintained for visual and ecological significance to protect against further urban expansion east of Plymouth along the A379, and to safeguard the individual identities of Brixton village and the hamlets of Chittleburn and Combe. The open spaces comprising the Green Corridor are integral to maintaining the rural character of these communities as stated in Policy Intent Env3 and Env4 (para 3.18).

1.7 The intention of Policy Env 6, the Brixton Open Gap, is to provide a protected landscape zone to the north and west of Brixton village.

1.8 Since the BPNP was formally made by SHDC in January 2020 it has become apparent that the policies intended to protect the Green Corridors and the Brixton Open Gap required modification to clarify the Plan’s intent.

2.0 Evidence supporting the need for clarification

The following planning applications have been approved during and after the making of the Brixton Parish Neighbourhood Plan which demonstrate ongoing pressure on the Green Corridors and the need to expand the Brixton Open Gap:

2.1 In April 2022 planning permission was granted for a single dwelling outside the settlement boundary (Lodge Lane) within the Green Corridor (1508/21/FUL).

2.2 A one-and-a-half storey dwelling has just been built within the Green Corridor (2946/18/OPA & 3097/20/ARM), Chittleburn.

2.3 Application approved for single dwelling immediately outside the settlement boundary (Lodge Lane) (0623/21/FUL).

2.4 Application 3097/20/ARM, approval reserved matters following outline approval 2946/18/OPA, Hilltop Cottages.

2.5 Application for single dwelling immediately outside the settlement boundary (Lodge Lane) has recently been refused (1844/21/FUL) 13/05/2022. Appeal dismissed by the Planning Inspector 03/03/2023. The Local Planning Authority refusal is an important decision as outlined below.

2.6 Further planning applications in the area proposed for clarification within the Plan modification would have significant potential to reduce the Brixton Open Gap between Brixton and Sherford and, if approved, will inevitably bring increased pressure to permit development within the Green Corridor.

Refusal of Application 1844/21/FUL by SHDC and the Planning Inspector highlights the importance of open countryside and retention of the undeveloped landscape character surrounding Brixton village as it is outside the village settlement boundary and fails to comply with the BPNP 8.0 Development Objectives. This underlines the importance of the Brixton Open Gap and the Green Corridors. It also fails to accord with JLP Policies TTV1, TTV2, SPT1, SPT2, DEV20 & DEV23.

2.7 Since the original BPNP was made, the recent COVID pandemic has resulted in many people reassessing their lives and expectations and to subsequently value the countryside even more than when the original plan was prepared. Since the pandemic there has been an increased appreciation of open space and access to nature, tranquillity and the enjoyment of the countryside for health and wellbeing. Demand for rural living is likely to place further pressure on Brixton and any encroachment upon the Brixton Open Gap and Green Corridors will erode the cherished character of the village.

2.8 The Parish Council is aware of anxiety and other mental health issues within the parish community created by the continuing uncertainty of pressure on green spaces and the countryside to provide more housing within these spaces. This is particularly pertinent in the context of the significant number of application approvals for 129 houses in Brixton between 2014 and 2019.

This modification therefore seeks to clarify the intention of the policies on Green Corridors and extend the Brixton Open Gap (BPNP Policies Env4 and Env6 respectively) by modifications to Env Map 3. The Policy wording does not change.

2.9 In supporting the BPNP, residents believed that the defined settlement boundary would provide a significant reduction in the number of planning approvals outside the village envelope to allow them to enjoy their homes and the immediate surrounding countryside without having the anxiety of the loss of this important environment by continually “looking over the shoulder” for new developments.

2.10 The parish has had a significant amount of concentrated development in recent years.

2.11 The proposed modification of Env Map 3 is to clarify the extent of the Green Corridors along the A379 at both the western and eastern ends of Brixton village by recognising the importance of the open agricultural fields in defining the character and limits of the village. This will safeguard the open space from urban expansion.

2.12 The modification will further support paragraphs 3.6 and 3.11 of the Environment and Landscape objectives with associated Env Map2.

2.13 Policy Env 6 Brixton Open Gap is intended to protect the rural character north and west of the village. The proposed modification to the defined area will provide a clearer policy of protection to the western side of the village which has been subjected to a significant amount of recent development. This will support the Green Corridor enhancement.

2.14 The Parish Council strongly supports the proposed modifications to the Brixton Open Gap and Green Corridors which will strengthen the protection of the open landscape which contributes to the rural character and general wellbeing of the parish community.

3.0 BPNP Proposed Modification: Environment

3.1 Modification:

There are no changes to the wording of the policies.

Env Map 3 is revised to show the proposed extensions to the Green Corridors and the Brixton Open Gap.

4.0 Summary

4.1 There are no significant amendments in the proposed Plan Modification that would change the intentions of the current Brixton Parish Neighbourhood Plan. The proposed changes consist of a minor change to the boundary of the Brixton Green Gap and clarification of the extent of the Green Corridors and strategic green spaces through the village.

4.2 There are no proposed changes to the wording of any of the current policies within the Plan.

4.3 These minor changes to the Policy Map ENV3 and illustrated on the separate Plan Policies Map are intended to clarify and enhance the existing policies within The Brixton Parish Neighbourhood Plan by:

- Addressing continued pressure that adds substantially to the cumulative impact of development outside of the defined village settlement boundary, that will adversely impact on the social wellbeing and character of the village as defined in policy Env 6.
- Contributing to support policy Env 6 to retain the character and individual identities of Brixton village and the hamlets of Chittleburn and Combe to ensure that future development does not erode these qualities.
- Clarifying the importance of the green corridors running through Brixton village in particular at the Western and Eastern ends of the village and the stepping stones of strategic planting that contribute to the green setting of the village.

- Supporting the identified locally important views over the South Devon AONB as illustrated in Env Map 2 which contribute to the significant setting of this special landscape.

5.0 Consultation Process

5.1 Brixton Parish Council consulted on a modification proposal, in accordance with Regulation 14 of Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, which commenced at 12:00hrs on Monday 12th December 2022 and ended at 12:00hrs Monday 23rd January 2023.

Responses were sent to the clerk of Brixton Parish Council by email clerk@brixtonparishcouncil.org.uk or by letter to:

Clerk to Brixton Parish Council, 24 Furzehatt Road, Plymstock, Plymouth PL9 8QS

6.0 Consideration of Representation (post January 23rd 2023)

6.1 With reference to the consultation exercise and having considered the representations received the Qualifying Body's (Brixton Parish Council) opinion on the merits of the proposed modification has not changed.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 It remains the Qualifying Body's opinion that the proposed modification is not so significant or substantial that it would have any impact on the nature or intentions of the plan.

Brixton Parish Council

December 2022

Updated May and August 2023

