

Ringmore Draft Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 14 Version, February 2021)

Regulation 14 Consultation response on behalf of South Hams District Council

Introduction

The Draft Ringmore Neighbourhood Plan has been published for a formal 6 week public consultation which took place between 6th November 2020 and 18th December 2020. This represents the plan reaching Regulation 14 stage of the plan preparation process, and offers the first formal opportunity for all stakeholders to comment on the emerging plan.

As the Local Planning Authority, South Hams District Council (SHDC) has a statutory duty to support the preparation of neighbourhood plans.

As well as its statutory duty, SHDC has an obligation to ensure that any planning document that sits within the suite of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) is consistent with its corporate objectives, and will make a positive contribution to the long term health, wellbeing and resilience of the district's communities. Advice and guidance provided to neighbourhood plan groups will reflect this wider remit, although it is acknowledged that this guidance may go beyond what is strictly required by regulation.

Advice and guidance at Regulation 14 stage is most usefully focused on:

- 1) The Draft Ringmore Neighbourhood Plan Vision, Aims and Objectives
- 2) Comments on Supporting Text
- 3) The Draft Neighbourhood Plan Policies
- 4) The Draft Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base

On a general note, comments were made on the text of the Neighbourhood Plan prior to consultation on this Regulation 14 Version. In some instance those comments are repeated below. I would suggest if there are specific reasons why those comments have not been addressed that the reasoning is discussed with the Council during preparation of the Regulation 15 Version of the NP.

Thank you for sending me the comments that the Group have received from other bodies/individuals in regard of the Regulation 14 consultation. I have referred to these, where appropriate, in my comments below. I note that the Group are following up these comments where necessary to inform the content of the Regulation 15 Version of the NP.

1) The Draft Ringmore Neighbourhood Plan: Vision and Objectives

The Ringmore Draft Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) sets out policies and approaches which will add local detail to policies in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. The Plan sets out a vision for Ringmore as follows:

That the Parish continues to meet the needs and aspirations of local people by protecting and conserving the culture, heritage, bio-diversity and aesthetic qualities that make our environment unique. At the same time the economic prosperity needs to be supported and sustained so that the well being of the parish is maintained and it remains a thriving community in which to live, work, visit and play.

The vision effectively provides a good summary of what is seeking to be achieved for the Ringmore Parish. The aims and objectives, stemming from the Vision, are set out in each subject related alongside the policies that give them effect. The aims and objectives relate well to the Vision and the Policies.

2) Comments on Supporting Text

- a) Foreword: Page 3: 3rd para.....** NB the Plan will be subject of a further 6 weeks statutory consultation following the Regulation 15 submission. This is carried out by SHDC.
- b)** Generally through the Plan where a JLP policy is referred to please annotate "JLP Policy DEV.25" not "DEV25". See page 20 para 5, opening sentence. The Plan will be read by others who are not conversant with the JLP.
- c) Page 21: Final three paras.....**Justification of a Dark Skies Policy is included in the Justification of Policy RNP2. No mention is made of Dark Skies in the Policy itself. Would this not be better placed under **Policy RNP15**(see point d) below this Policy is annotated **RPN15** in the text).

- d) Policy annotation is predominantly **RNP** in the text however it becomes RPN at Policy 14. Suggest proof reading whole text to ensure continuity.

3) The Draft Ringmore Neighbourhood Plan: The Policies

The Plan contains 20 policies as annotated in the table below. A commentary is provided for each policy that looks at the level of conformity with locally adopted policy and national guidance, as well as considering how each policy will be implemented in order to achieve the aims and objectives of the plan.

Policies and SHDC comments

Policy	SHDC comments
<p>Policy RNP1 - Development within the Settlement Area</p> <p>New development will be supported within the Settlement Area, where justification of need is proven, and proposals are in line with: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development is contained within the Settlement Area shown in fig 10 and the priority requirement for development will be for local housing needs and the need for development is clearly demonstrated. 2. The development meets the requirements of other higher-level relevant policies of the NP. 	<p>It is not necessary to justify need for proposed housing within the settlement boundary.</p> <p>Similarly, neither is it legitimate to set a priority for local needs for development proposed within that settlement boundary.</p> <p>Given the response from Natural England and Jonathan Nicholls it will be necessary consider more fully the reasoning behind the choice of settlement boundary. I am aware this work has commenced.</p> <p>NB: The accepted term is “settlement boundary” not “Settlement Area”. The correct annotation is used in Fig 10.</p>
<p>Policy RNP2 - General Design Principles for New Development</p> <p>New housing development will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The design is traditional, of good quality and sympathetic with the character of the surrounding built and non-built environment. 2. The character of the parish is not negatively affected. 3. Listed buildings and heritage assets are not adversely affected. 4. Enough “Off Road” parking is provided in line with SPD 2020 requirements. 	<p>Criteria 1: Concerned at the insistence on “traditional” design. Contemporary/modern design may be acceptable if carefully considered?</p> <p>Criteria 4: Would this better worded “adequate” rather than “enough”. Reference is made to the “SPD 2020”. Suggest the Glossary (page</p>

<p>5. New roof heights are not to be higher than existing attached buildings and no higher than the general height of buildings in the local area. The development should not impinge upon neighbour's outlook or obstruct protected public views.</p> <p>6. Any development satisfies the latest septic tank regulations (Jan 1st, 2020) and or ties into the existing South West Water Main Sewage without overwhelming capacity.</p> <p>7. The development meets the requirements of all other relevant policies of the Plan.</p>	<p>83) is amended so there is a direct tie up to the annotation being used.</p> <p>Criteria 5: Full justification of this criteria should be included if it is to be retained. Support expressed by local people does no amount to a planning justification. Furthermore, there is no right to view in planning terms. I make suggestions in relation to the treatment of important views under Policy RNP13.</p> <p>Criteria 6: I suggest SWW are consulted on the content of this criteria.</p> <p>NB See reference to Dark Skies in the Comments on the Supporting Text above under item 3.</p>
<p>Policy RNP3 - Development through CLT or other Private Self Build initiatives</p> <p>Planning applications for small scale developments will be supported where community-led schemes or, private self-build can achieve affordable housing to meet local needs, subject to the following: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The design meets the requirements in Policy RPN 2. 2. It must be for persons defined in the SPD as "local" or with strong local ties and provide affordable housing as such, in perpetuity. 	<p>I suggest that this Policy is reworked and tied in with the content of JLP Policy TTV27. I am not sure whether the reference here is for support for appropriate "exceptions sites" as covered in TTV27? I can only think it is given that development within the settlement boundary is covered in Policy RNP 1?</p>
<p>Policy RNP4 – Housing Development not for use as "Primary Residence"</p> <p>Any proposals for new development within the settlement area, other than one for one replacement housing, will be supported if the proposal is required: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to meet identifiable local housing need and 2. Is to be used as a primary residence 	<p>I would suggest that reference is made to NPs that have passed examination which will give a guide to acceptable and perhaps more robustly worded versions of a Policy that seeks to control Primary Residence.</p> <p>The provenance of the 27'5% second homes is not cross referenced in the justification of this Policy. This should be included as part of the Evidence Base and clearly cross referenced in the justification.</p>

<p>Policy RNP5 - Other development, subdivision of existing plots for building or extension to existing buildings</p> <p>Development such as extensions, replacement houses, building on subdivided plots will be supported if it is demonstrated that: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is no loss to the character or environmental quality of the surroundings. 2. The site is adequately serviced by suitable existing highways allowing safe access and egress to the property. 3. The development respects the amenity of adjoining properties. 4. The development is in keeping with other constraints set within the housing policy section and meets all other relevant policies of the Plan. 5. The roof height of any new development should not be higher than the existing roof height of development on the plot. 	<p>Criterion 4) The intent of this criteria is unclear. The “constraints” in the housing policy section should be made clear and the justification should indicate clearly why they apply.</p> <p>Criterion 5: Full justification of this criteria should be included if it is to be retained. Support expressed by local people does not amount to a planning justification.</p>
<p>Policy RNP6 - New Tourism Developments in Ringmore Parish</p> <p>Support will be given to tourism developments which are primarily aimed at high turnover, short occupancy forms of holiday.</p> <p>Development proposals related to tourism must also demonstrate tangible economic benefit to the local community, and this will be weighed against any potential loss of amenity for permanent residents of the parish. Where economic gain for the local community does not significantly outstrip loss of amenity, the proposed development will not be supported.</p> <p>Only holiday development proposals that are accompanied with practical measures to ensure that they will remain as holiday accommodation for perpetuity will be supported.</p>	<p>I think it worth adding the need for any tourism development proposed to meet the requirements of other relevant Policies in the NP</p>
<p>Policy RNP7 - Caravan Parks in Ringmore Parish</p> <p>Proposals for new camping, chalet or other holiday facilities will be supported where they are to be sited in areas outside the Undeveloped Coast, in locations where no adverse impact will be exerted on the environment and the safety and capacity of the rural road network will not be compromised.</p> <p>Proposals for expansion of holiday caravan park provision in the parish will not be supported.</p>	<p>Whilst I understand the wish to prevent development, redevelopment or expansion of these caravan further impacting on local amenity I am concerned that this policy as it is currently written, sets a moratorium on expansion. I do not believe this is acceptable in planning terms. I note neither of the caravan park owners have formally responded to the Regulation 14</p>

<p>For the avoidance of doubt, expansion of existing holiday caravan park provision includes any proposal to increase the geographical footprint of the park, any proposal to increase the number of static caravans, the forming of additional concrete caravan bases and re-purposing of existing holiday park facilities such as car and boat parks, dog-run areas, and waste storage areas to accommodate more caravans or "lodges".</p>	<p>consultation which gives me cause for concern. I note the efforts made by the Ringmore Group to contact the owners of the Parkdean resort and also the minutes of the meeting held with the local managers of the Bigbury Bay Holiday Park. I would suggest every effort is made prior to the submission of the Regulation 15 Version of the Neighbourhood Plan to obtain the formal views of the owners of each of these businesses.</p>
<p>Policy RNP8 - Enhancement of Tourism Facilities in Ringmore Parish</p> <p>Proposals for enhancement and updating of existing tourism facilities, including holiday caravan parks, will be supported, but only where other policies in this Plan have been addressed.</p> <p>In the case of proposed holiday caravan park enhancements, these will be supported only where they are accompanied by competent measures for lighting, landscaping and planting that will significantly ameliorate visual impact, transport network and offer reductions in levels of light pollution and noise.</p> <p>Any development proposal that would lead to returning any part of existing holiday parks, including the seafront and seafront car parks, to a natural state will be supported, provided that other policies in this Plan are met.</p>	<p>I suggest it would be worth considering incorporating the elements relating to the caravan parks in Policy RNP 7. Policy RNP 7 then should be focussed on other tourism facilities in the Ringmore Parish.</p>
<p>Policy RNP9 - Employment and Business: providing employment opportunities</p> <p>This Plan supports proposals for expansion of employment opportunities in Ringmore Parish, in particular opportunities for home-working, where:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The amenity of residents in the parish is not adversely affected due to noise, inappropriate or excessive vehicle parking and any other type of disturbance. 2. The privacy of neighbouring residents is not adversely affected. 3. The peaceful and tranquil atmosphere of the parish is not unduly compromised. 4. Appropriate proposals for screening and landscaping are included where necessary to preserve 	<p>Criteria 2 suggest rewording:-</p> <p>The privacy and amenity of neighbouring residents is not adversely affected.</p>

<p>the parish aesthetic.</p> <p>5. Any proposed new buildings are sensitive to their surroundings and comply with other policies in this plan.</p>	
<p>RNP 10 - Employment & Business: agricultural development and farm diversification</p> <p>Proposals for repurposing agricultural land to create new touring caravan or camping sites will be supported where these are to be sited outside of the Undeveloped Coast, in locations where no adverse impact will be exerted on the environment and the safety and capacity of the local road network will not be compromised. Repurposing agricultural land for siting static caravans will not be supported.</p> <p>All proposals for farm diversification schemes will be expected to comply with relevant policies elsewhere in this plan.</p>	<p>This policy should refer to agricultural land and buildings? I again do not believe the Policy can set a moratorium on development in the Undeveloped Coast. JLP Policy DEV 24 sets out stringent criteria to be met but does not set a moratorium on development.</p> <p>Suggest this Policy is reworded with criteria identified against which development will be considered?</p>
<p>Policy RNP11 - Maintain or develop community assets</p> <p>Proposals which seek to maintain or improve the community assets as viable business and important community hubs will be supported so long as they meet the following criteria: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Journeys End Inn as a parish asset is maintained such that if a change of use is required for any reason it is still maintained as some form of parish asset. 2. All Hallows Church is maintained to continue to provide pastoral care and act as a community hub. 3. The Parish Room is maintained and or improved as a social space for the benefit of all. 4. The Women’s Institute Hall is maintained and or improved as a social space for the benefit of all. 	<p>Suggest this Policy is reworded to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify the criteria against which improvement to these facilities will be considered. 2) Seek to prevent change of inappropriate change of use of the buildings and require any planning application seeking such a change of use be accompanied by marketing evidence covering a suitable time period say 2 years.
<p>Policy RNP12 – Improvement to health and wellbeing facilities</p> <p>Support will be given to any proposal, which contributes towards the health and wellbeing of residents, provided it does not contravene other policies in the Plan.</p>	<p>No comment</p>
<p>Policy RNP13 – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</p> <p>Proposals which retain and enhance the Natural Beauty of the Parish, which sits wholly within the</p>	<p>Criteria 1) Most Groups have a separate Policy identifying views that should be protected. The choice of views should be evidenced and clearly identified on</p>

<p>South West AONB, will be supported provided that:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposals do not cause harm to the appearance and character of the AONB or result in harm to significant views on the approach and across the parish. These views can be found in appendix iv.' 2. Developments which result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats will be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and provision of a suitable mitigation strategy. 3. Development proposals that demonstrate that there are no adverse impacts on the natural environment (landscape and biodiversity) or that satisfactorily mitigate these impacts and enhance the natural environment where there is the opportunity to do so, will be supported. 4. Where mitigating measures are unavoidably required for development to be acceptable within its landscape setting, appropriate landscaping should be employed to mitigate the impact of the development, and such measures should include the use of native species of trees and hedges where planting is required. 	<p>a Proposals Map. Given the scale of Plan necessary to exhibit the views this can be placed on a second Proposals Map separate from the larger scale map showing the settlement boundary, Local Green Spaces etc.</p>
<p>Policy RPN14 – Biodiversity</p> <p>Proposals which support, protect and enhance the biodiversity of the parish and maintain the Devon Banks and public access via public footpaths, permissive paths, and the coastal path will be supported provided that:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposals that might adversely affect wildlife sites and habitats are avoided. Sites for the Cirl Bunting and Horseshoe and other varieties of bats exist in the parish and enjoy special protection which must be respected. 2. If it is possible to satisfactorily mitigate any adverse effects on the wildlife and biodiversity of the parish this must form part of the planning application at its inception. 3. All new developments should include measures to enhance the biodiversity of the area. 	<p>Criteria 1: Policies must be precise the use of the word “might” is not. Criteria 2: This happens as a matter of course and need not be stated.</p>
<p>Policy RPN15 – To protect the tranquillity of the environment and maintain the dark skies.</p> <p>Any appropriate development should meet the E1 standard for any outside lighting, including security lighting, as detailed in Guidance Note 01/2020, Guidance notes for the reduction of</p>	<p>See comment c) in Comments on Supporting Text.</p> <p>Guidance Note 01/2020 does not appear in the Glossary. I can see this refers to the third cited document below the justification statement. This needs to be clearer for other readers/users of the NP.</p>

<p>obtrusive light, issued by the Institution of Lighting Professionals.</p>	<p>The reliance on this document in the Policy needs full justification and clarity on what text within the document should be taken into account by developers and clearly stated.</p>
<p>Policy RNP16 – Descriptive Missing All planning applications should avoid a negative visual impact on any Heritage Asset listed in appendices i and ii or in its proximity. The latter has, in this respect, the same weight as Grade II Listing.</p>	<p>I would suggest that reference is made to NPs that have passed examination which will give a guide to acceptable and perhaps more robustly worded versions of a Policy that seeks to control development that may affect heritage assets. National and JLP is sufficient to protect Statutory Assets. Suggest this Policy is reworded based on the wording in made NPs to protect the non-Statutory Assets that are identified in Appendix ii. I am not sure that non -statutory assets can be awarded the same weight as statutory assets. This needs to be checked.</p>
<p>Policy RNP17 – Local Green Spaces All planning applications should avoid a negative visual impact and should not infringe on the area of any Green space listed or in its proximity. The Town Well site at SX 65085 45879 – the Well Head is Grade II listed. The Bowling Green – a ½ acre strip of land centred at SX 65107 45711. The Bus Shelter Green at SX 65262 45963. The Challaborough Boat Green at SX 64759 44954. See appendix iii</p>	<p>I would suggest that reference is made to NPs that have passed examination which will give a guide to acceptable and perhaps more robustly worded versions of a Policy that seeks to protect Local Green Spaces.</p>
<p>Policy RNP18 - Maintenance or Improvement to Transport infrastructure delivering safety improvements for all road users. Schemes which deliver improvements to safe access to and within the Parish will be supported if: - 1. The existing network of mainly single-track roads bordered by traditional Devon Banks is not damaged causing degradation to the rural character of the Parish. 2. Due thought is exercised regarding vehicle speed and size restrictions with applicable signage.</p>	<p>I believe the purpose of this Policy requires some thought. Improvements to the system of roads is under the control of Devon CC such improvements as they may carry out may not require planning approval. Improvements that result from the implementation of a planning consent I am assuming are the target of this Policy. If so</p>

<p>3. Existing footpaths, cycle ways and bridleways are maintained or improved.</p> <p>4. Separation of non-motorised vehicle users from motorised vehicles is improved.</p> <p>5. Streetlighting is not developed.</p>	<p>Criterion 1) is so restrictive as to allow no improvement.</p> <p>Criterion 2) Speed restriction and signage are the responsibility of DCC.</p> <p>Criterion 3) Most Groups include a separate Policy in relation to footpaths, bridleways and cycleways.</p> <p>Criterion 4) needs to be more specific. On face value it conflicts with Criterion 1).</p> <p>Criterion 5) is not justified. This is the responsibility of Devon CC: have they been consulted specifically on this issue? Finally, I do not consider the NP can set a moratorium on street lighting.</p>
<p>Policy RNP19 - Connectivity Infrastructure.</p> <p>Proposals which seek to improve connectivity for either business or private use will be supported, so long as they meet the following criteria: -</p> <p>1. The scale of any such development is sympathetic to the surrounding environment with transmitters/ receivers or other equipment placed such that there is no loss of amenity or damage to Heritage buildings or sites.</p> <p>2. Any such equipment is sensitivity sighted, screened, or camouflaged such that they do not detract from or diminish the essential qualities of the AONB.</p> <p>3. Locally important views, skylines and vistas are not negatively impacted.</p> <p>4. In respect of development proposals for communications infrastructure, applicants must demonstrate that they have fully explored opportunities to erect apparatus on existing buildings, masts or other structures and ensure that the number of radio and telecommunication masts are kept to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network.</p> <p>5. Wherever possible, provision should be made for suitable ducting to enable more than one service provider to provide connections to individual properties from connection cabinets located on the public highway, or some alternative point available to different service providers.</p>	<p>Criterion 3) I have suggested elsewhere in my comments that important local views should be subject of a separate policy to which this Policy can reference.</p>

<p>Policy RNP20 - Development of low carbon energy production within the Parish.</p> <p>Schemes which are small in scale, unobtrusive and deliver improvements to low carbon or renewable energy creation within the Parish will be supported if: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The scale of any such development is sympathetic to the surrounding environment. 2. Any such scheme is sensitively sighted and screened such that it does not detract from or diminish the essential qualities of the AONB. 3. Proposals for the change of land use to accommodate the installation of renewable energy equipment, such as solar panels or wind turbines, will be supported only where the visual impact does not affect the amenity of residents or the general parish aesthetic. 	<p>No comment</p>

4) The Draft Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base

The Evidence Base, in particular, the Local Evidence upon which the NP relies, is difficult to locate. I would suggest that all evidence that is relied on in the justification of the policies is contained in an Appendix to the NP with access to its website location available at just a click. General documentation can be listed but again with website location identified.

As referred to under Policy RNP4 the evidence base for the calculation of the number of non-primary residences needs to be fully documented and explicit.

Conclusion

The Ringmore Neighbourhood Plan seeks to manage development within a sensitive landscape, whilst enabling small-scale organic development that meets the priorities and needs of the local community. The broad aspirations of the plan are consistent with adopted and emerging local policy.

For the most part, this consultation response poses questions or proposes amendments that are designed to make a positive contribution to the next iteration of the neighbourhood plan.

It is clear that a great deal of work has been undertaken to bring the Plan to this stage of the Neighbourhood Planning process. The draft plan is well presented with good illustrations and clear plans and graphics.

SHDC considers that the draft Ringmore Neighbourhood Plan can be brought into compliance with local policy and national guidance subject to the advice and guidance provided being followed and would welcome dialogue with the NP group to help achieve this.

Duncan Smith
Neighbourhood Planning Officer
South Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils
Email: Duncan.smith@swdevon.gov.uk
Telephone: 01803 861178

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