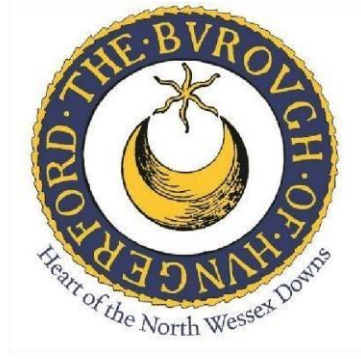


HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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DRAFT MINUTES of the **Extraordinary Full Council Meeting** held on Monday 27th January 2025 at 6.45pm in the Library, Hungerford.

Present: Cllrs, Simpson, Fyfe, Keates, Cole, Coulthurst, Reeves, Knight, Hudson.

Also present: District Cllr Denise Gaines (DG) from West Berks Council (WBC)

In attendance: Town Clerk, (TC).

FC20250015 **Note apologies for absence.** Cllrs Alford, Winsor, Montgomery, Carlson and Armstrong

FC20250016 **Declarations of interest** – None

FC20250017 **Propose response to West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2022-2039 (LPR) Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications (6 December 2024 - 31 January 2025 – Refer to draft document – Cllr Hudson** talked through the proposed response

Proposed: Cllr Hudson

Seconded: Cllr Cole

Resolution: Agree the suggested response, with minor amendments to insert ‘consistently refer to either AONB or National Landscape’ **refer to the comments agreed below (which include the minor amendment)**

ACTION: Clerk to respond to the Consultation prior to the deadline.

Hungerford Town Council wishes to comment as follows:

- 1) It agrees with and accepts the proposed 55 dwelling allocated in the plan which is identified in our draft Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2) The text in several locations is still referring to the AONB. Presumably all references should now only refer consistently to either the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, or National Landscape.
- 3) MM3 Policy SP1. In this policy it refers to housing net densities on the edge of settlements of 30 and 20 per hectare on the AONB (National Landscape). We would suggest that the 30 per hectare should also apply to the AONB because:
 - a) There is little evidence to suggest a lower density of 20 per hectare fits in any better within an AONB
 - b) It means that to achieve the housing target 50% extra land is required and the key to minimising impact to the AONB is to take up less land

c) Lower densities make housing less affordable and harder to deliver low cost housing.

Recommend that the wording is changed to state:

Developments on the edge of defined settlements are generally expected to secure a net density of 30 dwellings per hectare outside of the AONB, and 20 dwellings per hectare within the AONB.

4) MM5: support the reference to Neighbourhood Plans to clarify the exceptional circumstances necessary for any allocation of a major development in the National Landscape.

5) MM7 SP3. Query the statement that non-strategic allocations within a settlement boundary do not count towards the dwelling numbers, which is notably problematic for settlements within the National Landscape. The difficulty with this approach is that the only way to meet the housing number is through extending the settlement boundary when there may well be suitable brown field sites, which should be given the highest priority since they are generally more sustainable. In the National Landscape minimising development into green fields is important.

Suggest that the wording of MM7 para 4.34 is changed to: 'Non-strategic residential allocations within Neighbourhood Plans situated within defined settlement boundaries, except those in the National Landscape with more than 5 dwellings, will not count towards meeting the housing requirement figure in policy SP12.' The second sentence should be deleted.

6) On a related matter, the Reg 16 Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan proposes to allocate two sites and to amend the settlement boundary to encompass these allocations. The extract from the policy map below shows the allocations HUN12 & HUN13 within the extended settlement boundary. The proposed new paragraph after para 4.34, could effectively mean that the allocations are not strategic and are within the settlement boundary, therefore the 55 dwelling requirement for Hungerford is not being met.

Therefore, it is suggested that either: (i) the wording should be clarified in the Local Plan to make clear that a NP can amend the settlement boundary once allocations have been made; or (ii) a response provided by the Local Plan Inspector so that the NP Examiner could, if needed, suggest that the settlement boundary is amended to exclude these site allocations.

