

**Second Review of the Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan  
for Three Rivers District Council**



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## 1.0 The Brief

- 1.1 Croxley Parish Council resolved to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan in 2013 and Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) designated the Area in January 2014. During consultation with the public on a “Final Consultation Draft” of the Plan dated 02 February 2016, POS Enterprises (POSe) was requested to conduct an independent review on behalf of TRDC. The Council sought confirmation that:
- 1 the Plan would meet the basic conditions;
  - 2 the policies do not conflict with the NPPF and Local Plan policies; and
  - 3 the policies would be useable as part of the development plan (for example by being realistic and not too restrictive in the control of development).
- 1.2 The consultation ended in June 2016 and subsequently changes were made to the Plan, including changes that followed advice in the POSe report. On 15 December, the Parish Council resolved to submit the revised Plan (now dated 19 January 2017) to TRDC for them to organise the Regulation 16 consultation and proceed to independent examination of the Plan.
- 1.3 TRDC have asked POS Enterprises to conduct a further independent assessment of the Plan on the same basis as before but reviewing the 20 policies only and not the Aims.
- 1.4 In addition to the NPPF, the following development plan documents are relevant:
- TRDC Core Strategy 2011
  - Development Management Policies LDD 2013
  - Site Allocations LDD 2014

## 2.0 The Basic Conditions

- 2.1 To allow a neighbourhood plan to progress to referendum the Examiner is required to confirm whether it has been prepared in such a way that it meets the “Basic Conditions” set out in the primary legislation, regulations and summarised in National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), para.65. A Basic Conditions Statement should be prepared by the Parish Council setting out the reasons why it considers the Plan meets the basic conditions. The Plan now includes such a statement, which has been considered in this review. The review also takes into account advice in NPPG, para. 069 onwards.
- 2.2 This second review focuses on Basic Conditions (a), (d) and (e):
- Condition (a) whether *the Plan has been prepared having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State.*

- Condition (d) whether *the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.*
- Condition (e) whether *the making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area.*

2.3 The findings of this Review are set out in the accompanying table. The first column under each policy indicates those NPPF paragraphs that are relevant, the second column the most relevant TRDC Local Plan (Core Strategy) and DMD policies and the third whether the Plan is likely to meet the Basic Conditions. The RAG (Red Amber Green) status indicates whether the policy is consistent with the Basic Conditions (status green) or will be if amended as suggested (status amber). Some are red status and may have to be dropped from the Plan or dealt with quite differently. The final column offers further explanation and recommends a course of action to improve the likelihood of the Plan meeting the Basic Conditions.

### **3.0 Conclusions**

3.1 The first POSe review concluded that *The Croxley Green community has put an enormous amount of effort into creating the Draft Neighbourhood Plan and its appendices. With suitable amendment, the Plan is capable of employing strong and locally nuanced policies that will complement very well those of the District Council. That will ensure new development is sustainable, supports or improves local social infrastructure and complements those elements of local character that are special. The Parish and District Councils will find that the additional time taken to so amend the Plan will be time well spent.*

3.2 This second review has found that the authors of the Plan have taken on board much of the previous advice, but not all, and hence there remain weaknesses. For example, previous advice to have an overarching policy commitment to the NPPF principle of sustainable development, to give essential context to other policies focussed on development and detailed design, has not been adopted. There is, however, the following reference in the supporting text to the Sustainability Objective: *Sustainable development is the key principle underpinning the TRDC Core Strategy and the priorities for sustainable development are as set above. This Neighbourhood Plan reflects TRDC's overarching policy on sustainable development and aspirations for social progress which recognises the needs of the whole community.*

3.3 The review has also found new or reworded policies conflicting with Government requirements, for example in respect of standards for new housing. Given the effort that the community has put into the Plan to get this far down the road, it would be

prudent to seek guidance from TRDC as to how to repair the Plan in the highlighted areas to ensure the Plan progresses quickly to a referendum.