

Question 1 – Is the wording of SP1 fully consistent with the NPPF para 14?

We do not consider that Policy SP1 is fully compliant with the NPPF for the reasons stated in the representation by Phase 2 Planning on behalf of Hills Residential on Policy SP1 (Representor 1119259 Rep ID 511) i.e. that the second part of the policy effectively introduces an illogical addition to para 14 of the NPPF in seeking to apply Local Plan policy as an exception to para 14 in circumstances where the Local Plan is already found to be absent, silent or out of date.

Question 2 – Is it appropriate for the policy to require all development proposals to demonstrate that they contribute to the vision/objectives?

No. As per the same Phase 2 Planning representation on behalf of Hills (Representor 1119259 Rep ID 511), to require every development proposal to be assessed against the vision and objectives is not only impractical but also unnecessary, because the Policies of the Plan are formulated to give effect to the vision and objectives, so if a proposal accords with the Policies of the Plan, it must by default accord with the vision and objectives.

Question 3 – Is it necessary for the Section 1 Plan to include Policy SP1?

It is helpful that the Plan makes clear that the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF is to be applied. But it is not necessary for the NPPF to be quoted. The Policy could be usefully reduced to just the first paragraph.

Question 4 – Is it reasonable for SP6 to require all development to meet the “highest” standards?

No. As per our representation 6521, the use of a superlative term is inappropriate, and runs the risk that a scheme that achieves a good quality design in its own right could be refused on the premise that an alternative design, not part of the submitted proposal, could provide an even higher standard of design. This is clearly not the intention of the NPPF, which requires “good design” or “high quality” design (paras 57 and 58).

The word “highest” should be replaced with “well designed”. In addition, assuming that the Policy is otherwise retained in its current form (i.e. without prejudice to our responses to Questions 6-8 below), then it should be made clear that proposals for development that comply with the list of bullet points that follow will constitute well designed proposals and will be approved (subject to compliance with other relevant policies of the Plan).

Question 5 – Will design codes for strategic developments lead to overly homogenous environments?

Please see our representation 6523 for our concerns relating to the use of Design Codes.

Question 6 – Is there an effective relationship between Policy SP6 and each LPA’s Section 2 Plan?

Please see our representation 6525, which notes that the inclusion of the bullet point list in SP6 is unhelpful as the Part 2 Plans contain design policies that cover similar matters, but in a different

format. It is unhelpful and unnecessary to have two sources of design policy, and the list of bullet points should be deleted in favour of a cross-reference to the relevant Part 2 design policy.

Question 7 – Are the principles set out relevant to all development, irrespective of its nature and scale?

No. Please see the representation by Phase 2 Planning on behalf of Hills (Representor 1119259 Rep ID 512). If the bullet point list in Policy SP6 is retained, the preface to it should be amended to include the terminology “where applicable”, but the fact that the principles set out in the bullet point list are not universally applicable further supports our contention that the list should be deleted, and design matters covered in the Part 2 Plans.

Question 8 – Should Policy SP6 include additional references ...?

The list of exclusions referred to by other representations serves to highlight the difficulty that SP6 faces as a policy. It is impossible in practice for one single Policy to list every single factor that influences place shaping, which is why Plans contain a suite of policies covering different topics, which have to be read together.

Presumably Policy SP6 is intended to only cover broad strategic issues relating to place making, but the list of bullet points strays in to detailed matters of architecture, landscaping, street furniture, parking, and so on. It covers some aspects of infrastructure provision, but not others. Inevitably, the list of bullet points is not all inclusive, and raises questions about why some matters are included and others not.

As noted in our response to Question 6, Policy SP6 also raises matters more properly considered in the relevant Part 2 design policies, and so is also introducing repetition.

Taken together with our responses to Questions 6 and 7, we suggest that the most appropriate approach is for Policy SP6 to be reduced to the first two paragraphs so that it is limited to a statement of strategic intent, coupled with the potential mechanisms to be used to secure high quality design (i.e. masterplanning etc for strategic schemes, and proposals to accord with the design policies of the Part 2 Plan).

Question 9 – Should the reasoned justification to policy SP6 refer to Sport England guidance?

No, as per our answers to Questions 6-8, Policy SP6 should be a broad strategic policy, with matters of detail dealt with elsewhere.