

Wraxall and Failand Neighbourhood Plan Additional Regulation 16 consultation

Wraxall and Failand Parish Council Comments

The examiner has invited further comments on whether the neighbourhood plan meets the basic condition of "being appropriate having regard to national planning policy" with regard to the specific revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued on 19 December 2023.

Following review of the latest revision to the NPPF the parish council have the following comments to make:

The latest revisions to the NPPF will require a number of changes to supporting text throughout the Neighbourhood Plan where direct reference is made to specific NPPF paragraphs, to reflect the paragraph renumbering of the revised NPPF. It is considered these factual updates can be addressed through minor amendments to the plan prior to publication.

Given the submitted Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any sites for housing the revisions to paragraph 14 in the NPPF are not considered to have a bearing on the Neighbourhood Plan.

The revised NPPF introduces a new paragraph 164 set out below:

"In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights). Where the proposals would affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets, local planning authorities should also apply the policies set out in chapter 16 of this Framework."

This new NPPF paragraph is relevant to Neighbourhood Plan Policy WF9, which includes encouraging new development to maximise energy efficiency by integrating the use of renewable and local carbon energy wherever feasible. The NPPF paragraph specifically provides significant weight to improvements to existing buildings, whilst Policy WF9 supports measures in new development in general. There is not considered to be a basic condition issue with regard to WF9 having appropriate regard to the NPPF following the addition on paragraph 164. Similar to Policy WF9, NPPF 164 is essentially positively worded in supporting energy efficiency measures and is therefore considered to compliment rather than conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan policy. Decision makers would read both the NPPF paragraph and WF9 alongside each other when forming a view on an application which involves an existing building. Notwithstanding this, the policy may benefit from some wording changes in light of NPPF 164. We have provided some suggested additional wording to the first part of Policy WF9 (below) for the examiners consideration:

Policy WF9

New developments are encouraged to maximise energy efficiency by integrating the use of renewable and low carbon energy wherever feasible. Proposals will be supported which maximise opportunities for on-site renewable forms of energy, including but not limited to:

- Solar photovoltaic and thermal panels
- Air and ground source heat pumps
- Combined heat and power

- Other domestic small-scale renewable technologies, including community delivered renewable schemes

Proposals for new buildings that achieve zero or near zero net energy consumption (Passivehaus standards) will be supported **where also consistent with other Development Plan policies. With regard to proposals for existing buildings that do not affect designated heritage assets, significant weight will be given to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements.**