

## Davies, Rebecca S

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**From:** Davies, Rebecca S  
**Sent:** 07 October 2021 16:55  
**To:** forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk  
**Subject:** Local Plan Submission Revised Draft Plan

**Importance:** High

Unfortunately I was not able to log in online and therefore have had to email comments on behalf of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

### Section 3.2 Strategic Objectives

- Blue infrastructure should be included with green
- Addressing climate change needs to be at the core of all objectives especially given the current climate emergency

### Policy CC1 – Climate Change

- Minimising is a poor attempt and will not ensure a carbon reduction in the Borough. The Council should seek to neutralise the carbon and energy affects and seek to create a carbon neutral environment by the end of the plan period or sooner if the Borough is to play its part in reversing the damaging effects of climate change.
- Conditions and policies need to be more robust and future proof.
- Policy needs to include improved long term landscape and soil management plans which can maximise carbon capture ( more beneficial than tree planting) which in turn can aid in offsetting new developments and pushing for carbon neutral developments.

### Section 7.2 - Design

- Landscape proposals and conditions within applications should be more robust and ensure longevity of green spaces. One of the biggest issues faced in developments are new residents and there desire for instant gardens which results in the loss of turfed areas to patios or synthetic/astro turf which removes the ability for carbon capture and adds to the heating of the atmosphere, both of which have a negative effect on climate change.

### Policy DM26 – Green Infrastructure

- Blue infrastructure should be at the core along with green.
- This policy needs to be intertwined with natural capital and nature recovery.

### Policy DM30 – Biodiversity

- At no point is nature recovery mentioned!

### Policy DM31 – Landscape

- Welcome the addition of lighting and dark skies within the policy and the detail included sadly the same level of detail is not applied to the AONB where the previous policy appears to have simply been cut and pasted in.
- Points 1-4 are all relevant in considering development with the AONB yet this is not reflected, the AONB should either be included in the policy heading or dealt with in its own standalone policy. West Berkshire Councils local Plan review includes a number of good examples of AONB policies which we have worked with them on, we would encourage you to consider these and adopt a similar approach which outlines what will be considered when assessing applications (a copy of one of the policies is attached below), including major developments, for which The AONB do not agree that major developments as detailed earlier in the plan to be development of 10+ dwellings. The development of 3 dwellings in the AONB can have just as great an impact of 15 dwellings elsewhere. We would be happy to work with you on the wording of a policy.

Kind regards

*Rebecca Davies*

Principal Landscape and Planning Officer

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are typical in the different part of the District and will be used by the Council as a starting guide development.

## North Wessex Downs AONB

### Policy SP 2

#### North Wessex Downs AONB

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will have appropriate and sustainable growth that conserves and enhances its special landscape qualities. Development will respond positively to the local context, conserving and enhancing local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting of the AONB. The strong sense of remoteness, tranquillity and dark skies, particularly on the open downland, should be preserved. The conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape will be the primary consideration in the assessment of all development proposals.

Development in the North Wessex Downs will support its local communities and rural economy in a manner commensurate with the statutory status of the AONB as a nationally valued landscape. Planning permission will be refused for major development in the AONB except in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.

In determining what constitutes major development the Council will consider whether development, by reason of its scale, character or nature, has the potential to have a significant adverse impact on the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. This will include consideration of the individual characteristics of a proposal and its context and the impact of cumulative development.

If an application is deemed to be major development then further consideration will take account of:

- The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- The cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the AONB, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

If it is considered that exceptional circumstances exist and development would be in the public interest, all opportunities to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB will be sought.

*Currently, the team are working at home and homeschooling and delays may occur in responding to enquiries and emails. We appreciate your patience during this time.*



[www.northwessexdowns.org.uk](http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk)



Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are some of the most beautiful and cherished landscapes in Britain. They need to be cared for, now and in the future.

 *Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail*