

From: Elizabeth Whiteley <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 08 August 2023 09:50
To: Planning Policy CCDC
Subject: Cannock Wood Neighbourhood Plan consultation
Attachments: CCDC consultation on CW's NP - Policy CW5.pdf

Dear Matthew and colleagues

This is a formal response to the consultation. I write to commend the Neighbourhood Plan document as submitted.

You have raised some concerns regarding the Viewpoints included in policy CW5. The attached pdf contains my responses to those concerns, and I request that you make the attached document available unedited to the Examiner in due course.

Thank you very much.

Liz Whiteley
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Policy CW5: Views and Vistas

Cannock Wood District Council has expressed written concerns:

- a. *'the overall effect of the policy/number of viewpoints which could be overly restrictive in terms of blocking development, largely within the Settlement Boundary.'*
- b. and *'in terms of the viewpoints issue raised the concern was not related to any specific viewpoint'.*

Informally it was put to me by CCDC that the *policy should not stand in the way of people building extensions in their back gardens or between adjacent properties.*

Response to those concerns

Viewpoint 1

- CCDC states the concern does not apply to any specific viewpoint, but in reality the only viewpoint where this concern might be applicable is viewpoint 1 (from the top of the playing field). Viewpoint 1 is the only one which looks through/over any part of the parish which is within the Settlement Boundary.
- The topography of Cannock Wood, on top of a hill with steep slopes down in all directions is very relevant. The photo below shows the playing field with the roofs of the houses lining Buds Road on the other side of the boundary hedge around the playing field. The back gardens of those houses slope away very considerably and are approximately 10 metres below the elevation of the top of the playing field, 226m above sea level. The views are to distant high ground, seen above the roof-tops and between large trees.



- Only a building which is higher than the current roof heights on Buds Road would have an adverse impact on the views from Viewpoint 1. Such a building or extension would be inappropriate in the light of Local Plan policies (including CP3 Chase Shaping and CP14 Landscape Character and Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)) and contrary to AONB Design Guide principles. The inclusion of Viewpoint 1 in the Neighbourhood Plan is supportive of those policies and principles and does not block development.
- Extensions between adjacent properties on Buds Road would not have an adverse impact on the views from Viewpoint 1, unless higher than existing ridge lines. Such views are already obscured by tree canopies at the edge of the Settlement Boundary, and many of those trees are subject to Tree Preservation Orders.
- The inclusion of Viewpoint 1 in policy CW5 is not overly restrictive in terms of blocking development within the Settlement Boundary. It might appear to be on a two-dimensional map but is not overly restrictive in the real three-dimensional context.

Viewpoints 2 - 6

- The fact that Cannock Wood lies at the highest point of Cannock Chase and that there are fairly steep downward slopes in all directions from Cannock Wood is the reason why there are many long views in all directions.
- It is not appropriate to have an abstract ceiling on the number of Viewpoints. The merits of each should be given due consideration.
- None of Viewpoints 2 – 6 look towards or over the Settlement Boundary. They look out directly over the Green Belt. They do not block development within the Settlement Boundary.

Viewpoints 7 - 9

- These are viewpoints identified in the AONB's Views and Settings Guide. Two of them do look towards Cannock Wood, and Cannock Wood as a whole, including the parts within the Settlement Boundary, lies with the AONB.
- To repeat the first paragraph of the 'Justification' to CW5: 'The Statement of Significance required to justify Cannock Chase's status as an AONB hangs on several key criteria including Scenic Quality, in accordance with Natural England's Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation. The special qualities of Cannock Chase on which AONB designation depends include 'inspiring views, both to the elevated plateau of the Chase from surrounding areas and from the high ground of the Chase across the farmed vales and countryside of the Midlands.'
- CCDC should not undermine the AONB by vitiating one of its special qualities in opposing the inclusion of Viewpoints 7 – 9 in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The views and vistas are of huge importance to all the residents of Cannock Wood, and that has been recognised in the Neighbourhood Plan as submitted. The viewpoints set out in policy CW5 are not overly restrictive and should be allowed to stand.