To : **Andrew Mead BSc (Hons) MRTPI MIQ – Examiner**
Copy to : **Philip Reese**
Jo Witherden
From: **Shillingstone Parish Council**
Re: **Independent Examination of the Shillingstone Neighbourhood Plan 2025 Review**
Examination Ref : 01/AM/SNP
VIA EMAIL

Dear Sir

The Parish Council considers that the addition to Policy 3 does enable the policy to still have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance.

Compliance with New Climate Change Duties
The amendments were considered necessary for this to be the case, given the need for the Parish Council to ensure that future development can and will contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.
This is explained briefly in section 5 of the Basic Conditions Statement, which notes that reference to optimising passive solar gain and cooling, and use of solar panels, the use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials, and the installation of water and/or energy efficiency measures to improve energy and water efficiency and reduce the risk of overheating and water shortages as made to Policy 3 was an update to meet with the new basic condition, as well as paragraph 162 of the NPPF which is quoted at the start of section 5.

Balancing Sustainability and Local Character
Clearly the climate change mitigation requirements are not the sole element of national planning policy considered, and the Basic Conditions Statement also makes specific reference to ensuring that the development will function well, remain sympathetic to local character and history, create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places etc. (NPPF 135).
The Parish Council have noted the concerns raised in the responses to the Regulation 16 consultation, and of particular relevance to this issue is the response from Christopher Hart, who contends that the revised policy "introduces a new policy route by which non-traditional or contemporary design may be justified on sustainability grounds". The Council disagrees with the contention that this would undermine the existing protection for the distinctive character of Shillingstone that this policy supports, as the policy caveats this with "provided that the overall development would still reflect the character of the area and would be broadly in keeping with its immediate context.". If anything, it highlights that the use of the traditional vernacular is the expectation, but that alternative approaches can be considered where these would nonetheless be in keeping with the site's context. An example given by the plan is in relation to wildlife-friendly features, such as sedum roofs, which are clearly not traditional vernacular but are an appropriate response to mitigate climate change that would not necessarily be out of context in the village, as explained in paragraph 3.37 of the revised plan.

Alignment with National and Local Guidance
The National Design Guide notes that "Innovative materials and construction techniques are being developed all the time" and that "The scale, form and appearance of a building influence what materials may be appropriate for its construction. Materials should be practical, durable, affordable and attractive. Choosing the right materials can greatly help new development to fit harmoniously with its surroundings." This suggests that sticking to rigidly to a requirement to use the traditional vernacular without having wider regard would not be appropriate, but that the materials should also be considered in light of their resonance with their surroundings.
The approach taken in the revised policy also aligns with the adopted Local Plan Policy 24 that states "In certain circumstances, a well-designed 'contemporary' or 'modern' scheme will be acceptable."