

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE CHET

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2038

EXAMINER: DEREK STEBBING BA (Hons) DipEP MRTPI

Emily Curtis
Clerk to Loddon Town Council
(on behalf of Loddon Town Council and Chedgrave Parish Council)

Vicky West
South Norfolk Council

Examination Ref: 01/DAS/CNP

15 April 2024

Dear Ms Curtis and Ms West

Following the submission of the Chet Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) for examination, I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters. I also have a number of questions for Loddon Town Council (the Qualifying Body) and South Norfolk Council (the Council), to which I would like to receive a written response(s) by **Friday 10 May 2024** if possible.

1. Examination Documentation

I can confirm that I am satisfied that I have received the draft Plan and accompanying documentation, including the Basic Conditions Statement, the Consultation Statement, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report, the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report and the Regulation 16 representations, to enable me to undertake the examination.

Subject to my detailed assessment of the Plan, I have not at this initial stage identified any very significant and obvious flaws in it that might lead me to advise that the examination should not proceed.

2. Site Visit

I will aim to carry out a site visit to the neighbourhood plan area during the week beginning 13 May 2024. The site visit will assist in my assessment of the draft Plan, including the issues identified in the representations.

The visit will be undertaken unaccompanied. It is very important that I am not approached to discuss any aspects of the Plan or the neighbourhood area, as this may be perceived to prejudice my independence and risk compromising the fairness of the examination process.

I may have some additional questions, following my site visit, which I will set out in writing should I require any further clarification.

3. Written Representations

At this stage, I consider the examination can be conducted solely by the written representations procedure, without the need for a hearing. However, I will reserve the option to convene a hearing should a matter(s) come to light where I consider that a hearing is necessary to ensure the adequate examination of an issue, or to ensure that a person has a fair chance to put a case.

4. Further Clarification

From my initial assessment of the Plan and supporting documents, I have identified a number of matters where I require some additional information from the Council and the Town Council.

I have five questions seeking further clarification, which I have set out in the Annex to this letter. I would be grateful if you can seek to provide a written response(s) by **Friday 10 May 2024**.

5. Examination Timetable

As you will be aware, the intention is to examine the Plan (including conduct of the site visit) with a view to providing a draft report (for 'fact checking') within around 6 weeks of submission of the draft Plan. However, as I have raised a number of questions, I must provide you with sufficient opportunity to reply. Consequentially, the examination timetable may be extended. Please be assured that I will aim to mitigate any delay as far as is practicable. The IPe office team will seek to keep you updated on the anticipated delivery date of the draft report.

If you have any process questions related to the conduct of the examination, which you would like me to address, please do not hesitate to contact the office team in the first instance.

In the interests of transparency, may I prevail upon you to ensure that a copy of this letter is placed on the Town Council and Council websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Derek Stebbing

Examiner

ANNEX

From my initial reading of the Chet Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2038 (Submission Version dated September 2023), the supporting evidence and the representations that have been made to the Plan, I have the following five questions for the Qualifying Body and the Council. I have requested the submission of responses **by Friday 10 May 2024**, although an earlier response would be much appreciated. All of the points set out below flow from the requirement to satisfy the Basic Conditions.

Question 1: Re. Section 2 – Neighbourhood Planning (Pages 2-4)

I understand that the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) was adopted by the Council on 25 March 2024, although it is presently subject to a six-week legal challenge period which ends on 7 May 2024.

This will necessitate some amendments to the draft Plan, principally at paragraphs 13, 16 and 17 but also at some other parts of the Plan, for example at paragraphs 43 and 89.

Can the **Qualifying Body** please review the full text of the Submission Version of the draft Plan, and provide me with a Note setting out the draft amendments (including deletions) that are necessary to take account of the Council's adoption of the GNLP, thereby replacing the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) as the strategic planning context for the draft Plan.

I shall wish to consider the amendments as a potential consolidated modification to the draft Plan, rather than as a series of modifications.

Question 2: Re. Policy 1 – Sustainable Design and Building Practices (Pages 15 and 16)

The Broads Authority has raised an objection to the text of this Policy, and specifically to its lack of clarity regarding self-build development proposals within the Broads Authority Area.

I consider this to be an omission, and I invite the **Qualifying Body** to review the representations submitted by The Broads Authority and to provide me with a Note setting out draft amendments to the text of Policy 1, which I may consider as a potential modification to the Plan. The **Qualifying Body** should also take account of comments that have been made by the Council regarding the content of this Policy.

Question 3: Re. Policy 4 – Affordable Housing (Page 25)

I have noted the Council's concerns regarding this Policy.

Can the **Council** please confirm that the proposed tenure mix for Affordable Housing shown in the Policy and in Figure 7 is acceptable in the context of the Council's policies and strategies for Affordable Housing provision.

Question 4: Re. Policy 7 – Biodiversity and Blue/Green Corridors and Figure 11 – Blue and Green Corridors (Pages 39-41)

The Council has raised some significant points of concern with regard to the text of Policy 7 and to Figure 11. From my initial assessment, I consider that both will require amendment.

Can the **Qualifying Body** please review the representations made by the Council and provide me with a Note on how it wishes to amend or re-draft the Policy to take account of the Council's comments and also to provide a revised copy of Figure 11 that includes the sites that are identified as being missing from the current version, which I may consider as a potential modification to the Plan.

Question 5: Re. Policy 8 – Local Green Space (Page 54)

The descriptor for the two proposed Local Green Spaces (LGSs) described as “*Small green areas in the 20th and 21st century estates, Loddon*” is too imprecise.

Can the **Qualifying Body** please provide me with a more accurate description for the two proposed LGSs, similar for example to that on Figure 13(6), which I may consider as a potential modification to the Plan.

I have also noted the Council’s objection to the proposed designation of ‘Green Space behind Grebe Drive, Chedgrave’ (LGS10) as a LGS, and also other representations regarding this site. I invite the **Qualifying Body** to review the Council’s objection and indicate whether it still wishes to propose its designation as a LGS in light of the Council’s comments.

The opening title of Figure 13 refers to “Designated Local Green Spaces 1-17”. Can the **Qualifying Body** please confirm that this is an error and should read “**1-16**”.

I confirm that I shall visit all of the proposed LGSs during the course of my site visit.

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