

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE ICKFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EXAMINER: Andrew Freeman BSc (Hons) DipTP DipEM FRTPI

Councillor Martin Armistead
Ickford Parish Council

David Broadley
Aylesbury Vale District Council

Examination Ref: 01/AF/INP

9 March 2020

Dear Mr Armistead and Mr Broadley

ICKFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION

Following the submission of the Ickford Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) for examination, I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters.

1. Examination Documentation

I can confirm that I am satisfied that I have received a complete submission of the Plan and accompanying documentation, including the Basic Conditions Statement, the Consultation Statement 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 intend to carry out a site visit to the neighbourhood plan area in the week commencing 16 March 2020. 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.

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. Nevertheless, I will reserve the option to convene a hearing should a matter or matters 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

I have a number of initial questions seeking further clarification from both the District and Parish Councils. I have set these questions out in the Annex to this letter. I would be grateful if a written response could be provided within **two weeks** of receipt of this letter.

I may have some further questions which seek clarification on other matters, once I have undertaken my site visit.

5. Examination Timetable

As you will be aware, the intention is to conduct the examination (including the site visit) with a view to providing a draft report (for 'fact checking') within 6 weeks of submission of the Plan.

However, in view of the additional information which I have requested, I must provide the opportunity for you to reply. Consequentially, the examination timetable will need to be extended. Please be assured that I will seek to mitigate any delay as far as is practicable. The IPe office team will 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 both the Parish Council and Local Authority websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Your sincerely

Andrew Freeman

Examiner

ANNEX

From my initial reading of the Ickford Neighbourhood Plan and the supporting evidence, I have some questions for Aylesbury Vale District Council and for Ickford Parish Council. I have requested the submission of a response within **two weeks** of receipt of this letter.

Questions for Aylesbury Vale District Council

1. What was the date of the application for designation as a neighbourhood area? Please confirm that the statutory publicity was carried out.
2. What is the anticipated adoption date of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan?

Questions for Ickford Parish Council

3. With regard to the Local Green Space (Evidence Report), was contact made with the landowners of the sites and were any objections received?
4. Policy NE1 – “trees that respect the local district landscape character”: Does the Landscape Character Assessment provide adequate guidance on the sort of planting that is expected? What specifically does the Parish Council have in mind under this requirement?
5. Policy NE1 – Institute of Lighting Professionals: Should the reference be updated to refer to Guidance Note 01/20?
6. Policy NE2: Is there sufficient clarity over what is meant by a “recognised” habitat impact assessment? Should there be reference to the Mitigation Hierarchy?
7. Policy BEH1: Bearing in mind the content of Paragraphs 195 and 200 of the NPPF, what is the justification for this policy?
8. Policy BEH2: How are “positive features” to be identified? Are they identified as such in any of the local documentation?
9. Are there four conservation areas in Ickford (as identified on the plan at Annex 3)?
10. Policy F1: What are the “established guidelines”?
11. Policy F1: Please comment on the representation of the Environment Agency and Aylesbury Vale District Council, particularly with regard to the approach to sites in Flood Zones 2 and 3 that may be within the Settlement Boundary (are there any?); also, sites within or adjacent to watercourses.
12. Policy ND1 – bullet points: Are both these criteria intended to apply?
13. Policy ND3 – Form: Are these requirements too prescriptive / adequately justified?
14. Policy ND3 – “The height of buildings should be respected, particularly adjacent to the conservation area”. Should this provision apply within the Conservation Area as well?
15. Policy ND3 – “No building [should be] designed to incorporate an attic floor”: What is the justification for this? Is the provision intended to apply even to single-storey dwellings?

- 16.** Policy ND3: What is meant by a “feasible landscaping maintenance plan”? Is there an expectation that all such plans would be covered by a planning obligation? Is this justifiable (could planning permission be refused in the absence of an obligation)?
- 17.** Policy ND3 – provision of car ports rather than garages: What is the justification for this?
- 18.** Policy ND3 – What is meant by “issues of flooding” and “lower level gardens” (how are they defined)? Is there an expectation that all related proposals would be covered by a planning obligation? Is this justifiable (could planning permission be refused in the absence of an obligation)?
- 19.** Policy ND3 – Necessary improvements to recreational and community facilities: How will these be identified and justified?
- 20.** Policy TT1 – How are “small garages” to be defined? What is the role of the Buckinghamshire Countrywide Parking Guidance?
- 21.** Policy E1: What is meant by “strong internet services” and “potential for internet connection”?
- 22.** Policy CF1 – “valued community facilities”: How will these be identified and their selection justified / is it intended that the valued community facilities comprise those identified in the bullet points?