

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE HANDFORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EXAMINER: Andy Mead BSc (Hons) MRTPI MIQ

Roger Small
Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Tom Evans
Cheshire East Council

Examination Ref: 01/AM/HNP

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cc: clerk@handforth.org.uk

18 April 2018

Dear Mr Small and Mr Evans

THE HANDFORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION

Following the submission of the Handforth Parish Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) for examination, I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters. I also have a number of preliminary questions for Handforth Parish Council, which is the Qualifying Body (QB), and Cheshire East Council, as set out in the **Annex** to this letter.

1. Examination Documentation

I 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 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report - 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 undertake a site visit to the Plan area during week commencing 23 April 2018.

The site 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 it is likely that 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 or matters come to light which make this 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, which I have set out in the Annex to this letter. I would be grateful if you can seek to provide a written response within two weeks from the date of this letter.

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 4-6 weeks of submission of the draft Plan.

However, I have raised a number of questions which will require time to answer. Consequentially, the examination timetable will be extended. Please be assured that I will seek 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 a copy of this letter and any responses to it are placed on both the Local Planning Authority and QB websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Your sincerely

Andy Mead

Examiner

HANDFORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION

Annex

From my initial reading of the Handforth Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) and the supporting evidence, I have a number of questions for the Qualifying Body (QB) and one for Cheshire East Council (CEC). I have requested the submission of responses within two weeks of the receipt of this letter, but earlier responses would be welcome.

Questions to the Qualifying Body

1. Q1. The Plan states that the plan period ends in 2030. Which year is the beginning of the period? The Cheshire East Local Plan (CELP) plan period is 2010 – 2030. Is the Handforth Neighbourhood Plan period the same?
2. Q2. The CELP (Table 8.4) states that for Handforth (including the North Cheshire Growth Village) 2200 new homes and 22 ha employment land will be provided in the plan period. Paragraph 5.1.4 of the Plan states “In relation to Handforth this amounts to 22 ha of employment land and 2158 new homes.” Please could the difference be explained? How many of the 2200 new homes planned for Handforth between 2010 and 2030 have already been permitted? Therefore, how many of the 2200 homes remain to be permitted between the start year of the Plan and 2030?
3. Q3. CELP allocation LPS 34 (250 houses) is outside Handforth parish, albeit adjoining the parish boundary. It appears to be described as part of Handforth. Is LPS 34 part of the overall 2200 housing allocation for Handforth?
4. Q4. The Plan states (page 36): “These allocations will generally be less than 5 ha in size (150 homes) but are unlikely to occur in Handforth parish”. What is the justification for that statement?
5. Q5. Policy H1 1). How is “infill development” defined?
6. Q6. Policy H4. What is the justification for the inclusion of “The Paddock Square” as an Incidental Open Space (See Regulation 16 representation from The Emerson Group)?
7. Q7. Policy H9 2). Should “(A) above” be “(1) above”?
8. Q8. Map 3 is intended to show the Handforth Settlement Boundary identified in the CELP. Where is the boundary? Could the QB please provide a map with the boundary delineated more clearly?
9. Q9. Should Map 10 include land east of the A34 as a Wildlife and Biodiversity Area (See Regulation 16 representation from Ms E Frearson)?
10. Q10. Paragraph 5.3.19 states that the parish has 10 buildings that are recognised as being of local importance, (non-designated Heritage Assets). Policy H10 then lists the same 6 buildings as in paragraph 5.3.19 and refers to Map 11 which shows the 6 buildings (and St Mary’s Church). Why are the remaining four buildings not included? Or are they included somehow as 28-36 Church Road, in which case, the phrase “these include” in paragraph 5.3.19 should probably be altered to “which are”.

Question to Cheshire East Council

11. Q11. Paragraph 5.3.20 and Policy H10 seek to add St Mary's Church to the list of non-designated heritage assets. The Annex 2 Glossary of the NPPF states under Heritage Assets: "Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)". Is St Mary's Church an asset identified by CEC or locally listed by CEC? If not, should it be completely excluded from Policy H10?