

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF NEW MILTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EXAMINER: David Hogger BA MSc MRTPI MCIHT

Suna King
New Milton Town Council

Mark Williams
New Forest District Council

Examination Ref: 01/DH/NMNP

30 October 2019

Dear Ms King and Mr Williams

NEW MILTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION

Following the submission of the New Milton Neighbourhood Plan (NMNP/the Plan) for examination, I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters. I also have a number of preliminary questions for the New Milton Town Council as Qualifying Body and a smaller number for New Forest District Council. These are attached as an Annex to this letter.

1. Examination Documentation

I can confirm that I am satisfied that I have received a complete submission of the draft Plan and accompanying documentation, including the Basic Conditions Statement, the Consultation Statement, the Habitats Regulations Assessment, the Sustainability Appraisal and the Regulation 16 representations, to enable me to undertake the examination.

Subject to my detailed assessment of the draft NMNP, I have not identified any very significant and obvious flaws that might lead me to advise that the examination should not proceed.

2. Site Visit

I intend to undertake a site visit to the neighbourhood plan area during the week commencing Monday 4th November 2019. This will assist in my assessment of the draft Plan, including the issues identified in the representations.

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 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

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 **three weeks** of receipt of this letter.

5. Examination Timetable

As you will be aware, the intention is to examine the NMNP (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, as I have raised a number of questions, I must provide the opportunity to reply. Consequently, the examination timetable will be extended but please be assured that I will seek 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 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 subsequent response are placed on the websites of the Town Council and the District Council.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Your sincerely

David Hogger

Examiner

ANNEX

From my initial reading of the submission draft New Milton Neighbourhood Plan and the supporting evidence, I have four questions for New Forest District Council (the District Council) and twelve questions for the New Milton Town Council (NMTC). I have requested the submission of a response within **three weeks** of receipt of this letter.

Questions for New Forest District Council (4)

1. Could the District Council confirm that it considers the NMNP to be in general conformity with the adopted strategic policies of the Development Plan and if it is generally consistent with the New Forest District Local Plan (2016-2036) which, as I understand it, has been considered at Hearing sessions and is currently being modified in light of the Inspectors' comments? Is the section in the NMNP on the Planning Policy context (pages 22 and 23) currently accurate? Are there any other amendments that need to be made to ensure consistency between the Local Plan (2016-2036) and the NMNP?

2. Paragraph 61 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that 'the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies'. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that clear policies should be established to address the needs of groups with particular needs, such as older people¹.

Could the District Council confirm (perhaps in conjunction with the National Park Authority) that at the District level the needs of the elderly are being satisfactorily addressed and that the approach being advocated by NMTC (based on balancing the demographic characteristics of the area) does not threaten the wider objective of meeting housing needs or run contrary to national advice?

3. Is the District Council satisfied that the NMNP, and in particular policy 'NM4 Design Quality', accords with the advice in the new National Design Guide that was published on 1st October 2019?

4. Is the District Council content that the buildings listed in policy NM10 should be identified as having local heritage and landscape value?

Questions for the NMTC (12)

1. Significant attention is given to addressing the imbalance in the demographic profile of the town, for example in paragraph 1.7, in the first objective on page 30 and in the supporting text to policy NM2 (page 34). However, although there currently appears to be no reason to challenge the approach being taken by the Town Council (subject to the District Council's response to Question 2 above), the case for taking this approach would be strengthened if there was some cross-reference to the evidence that is available, on which the approach is based. For example, in the last sentence in paragraph 2.10 it states that 'subsequent analysis indicates that this proportion has increased' (i.e. people aged over 65) but there is no reference to where the supporting evidence can be found. In the interests of clarity therefore, could the NMTC confirm (perhaps in consultation with the District Council) where that 'subsequent analysis' (and any other relevant evidence on this matter) can be found?

2. Could the NMTC confirm that there is a University at Totton, as stated in paragraph 2.13?

3. Policy NM1 includes a reference to the Green Belt. In the interests of clarity, can you please advise why this is not identified on the Policy Map (page 76)?

¹ PPG Reference ID: 63-006-20190626.

4. Paragraph 6.5 refers to the exclusion of the 'minerals area'. In the interests of clarity, can you please advise why this is not identified on the Policies Map (page 76)?

5. NPPF paragraph 16 confirms that policies should be clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals. Policy NM3 includes a number of land use requirements but it is not clear exactly where they should be provided – for example, a southern access road; a landscape buffer; trees to be retained; and mitigation measures. Also, the location of the adjacent minerals operation is not identified and it is not clear if there are any current minerals operations undertaken on the land which is shown green on the Policy Map on page 76? Can the situation please be clarified and a plan produced that indicates to the decision maker where it is expected that these requirements will be located.

6. On page 48 there are references to the 'Pedestrian Pound' report and the 'Grimsey Review'. It is not clear to the reader what these documents are and therefore is there any reason that a footnote explaining what these are and where they can be found could not be provided?

7. Policy NM7 relates to the provision of a cultural and community hub but the plan on page 77 does not distinguish between the potential sites for the various activities. In particular, because of the broad-brush approach, the plan could be interpreted as not providing protection to all of the War Memorial Recreation Ground. Is it the intention of the NMTC that the size of the existing open space should not be diminished? If that is the case, it should be made clearer in the supporting text to the policy.

8. Could the NMTC please confirm that the owners of the structures identified in policy NM10 have been informed of the policy and been made aware of the implications of the policy?

9. What is the justification for the 8m buffer in policy NM12(ii)?

10. Whilst it might seem obvious, for the avoidance of doubt, is there any reason why a plan that clearly identifies the 'seafront' and 'Becton Bunny' as referred to in policy NM13 cannot be included?

I had interpreted the reference to 'Gardens' in the policy as meaning all gardens within Barton-on-Sea but paragraph 6.80 begins: 'Barton Gardens does not have the strong underlying'. This implies to me that Barton Gardens is an identifiable location. Could the NMTC please provide clarity on this issue?

In policy NM13 (under Becton Bunny), there is a reference to 'Long Meadow' but this is not referred to in the supporting text or identified on the Policy Map. In the interests of clarity, I suggest it should be.

11. What is the role of the NMTC in monitoring and is there a reason why it is not set out on page 69?

12. Bearing in mind the emphasis placed on achieving a more demographically balanced community, is there a reason for not including a proposal for the provision of a youth facility (page 72)?