

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE BROMHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EXAMINER: Wendy Burden BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

Julie Betts
Clerk to Bromham Parish Council

Sonia Gallaher
Bedford Borough Council

Examination Ref: 01/WB/BNP

19 March 2020

Dear Ms Betts and Ms Gallaher

BROMHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION

Following the submission of the Bromham Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan/BNP) 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 will aim to carry out a site visit to the neighbourhood plan area in the week beginning 6 April 2020, subject to the prevailing government COVID-19 advice at that time. 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 (and again further respecting the current COVID-19 threat).

3. Written Representations

I note that some of those who have submitted representations have asked to present their case at a hearing. Under paragraph 9(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) the general rule is that the examination should take the form of the consideration of written representations. At this stage I consider the examination can be conducted solely by means of the written representations, 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

Before I proceed further in the Examination, I do require some assistance from Bromham Parish Council (BPC) and Bedford Borough Council (BBC). I note that the BNP has been prepared in accordance with the several different BBC development plan documents in effect in 2019, whilst having regard to the policies of the emerging Local Plan 2030. The Local Plan 2030 has now been adopted by BBC, and whilst there are some policies which have been saved from the earlier development plan documents, a number have been replaced by the policies in the Local Plan 2030. To enable me to properly examine the BNP and assess its general conformity with the development plan as now adopted, I would request BPC and BBC respond to the following questions:

1 To what extent do the policies in the BNP generally conform with the strategic policies of the Local Plan 2030 as adopted?

2 Can Table 1 of the Basic Conditions Statement be updated to remove reference to former development plan policies which have been replaced, and to insert the policies of the Local Plan 2030 where relevant?

3 Are there any policies in the Local Plan 2030 which are relevant to the BNP, but which have not been addressed by the BNP?

4 If the answer to the above is yes, is it appropriate for those policies to be addressed in the draft submitted BNP or would it be appropriate for them to be addressed in a future review of the BNP?

In addition:

- is it possible to provide me with a larger scale version of Map 5 in the BNP?
- Does Map 6 in the BNP show site 52 rather than site 53?

I may have some further questions which seek clarification on other matters and which I will wish to put to BPC and/or BBC, once I have received the information requested above. If this is necessary, the questions will be set out in a further letter.

5. Examination Timetable

As you will be aware, the intention is normally 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, and I would be grateful for your response by **3 April 2020**.

Consequently, the examination timetable will need to be extended. Please be assured that I will seek to mitigate any delay as far as is practicable. At this juncture it should also be noted that there may be unavoidable delays as a result of the current COVID-19 threat, which we cannot yet predict. In any event, the IPE office team will endeavour 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 both the BPC and BBC websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Your sincerely

Wendy Burden

Examiner