

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE ODELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EXAMINER: Wendy Burden BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

Diane Robins
Clerk to Odell Parish Council

Sonia Gallaher
Bedford Borough Council

Examination Ref: 01/WB/ONP

30 March 2022

Dear Ms Robins and Ms Gallaher

ODELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION

Following the submission of the Odell Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan/ONP) for examination, I would like to deal with some initial procedural matters for the submitted ONP. I also have an initial question for Odell Parish Council (OPC) to which I would like to receive a written response **by 14 April 2022**, if possible.

1. Examination Documentation

I can confirm that that I have received the submission of the Plan and all the accompanying documentation, including the Basic Conditions Statement, the Consultation Statement, the Strategic Environmental Screening Assessment Report, the Habitats Regulations Assessment and the Regulation 16 representations, to enable me to undertake the examination. I received the full set of documents on 28 March 2022.

Subject to my detailed assessment of the Plan, I have not at this initial stage identified any significant and obvious flaws 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 week beginning 4 April. 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 have one matter to raise at this stage which I set out below, but I anticipate that I may have additional questions following my site visit, which I will set out in writing separately

3. Written Representations

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. Question of clarification

I do have one matter to raise with the OPC at this stage. It is stated in section 1.1 of the ONP that it sets a vision “through to the end of 2031”; and the heading to chapter 3 is “Vision and Aims 2022-2031”. Is it intended that the Policies of the ONP should cover this period? The adopted Bedford Local Plan (BLP) covers the period to 2030. Is there any reason for extending the period for the Vision and/or the Policies beyond the period covered by the BLP 2030?

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 must provide an opportunity to reply to the matter raised above, and in the event that I have any questions seeking clarification as a result of my site visit, I must also provide the opportunity for you to reply. This would mean that the examination timetable will be extended. Please be assured that I would seek to mitigate any delay as far as is practicable. The IPe office team will keep you updated on any change to the date of the site visit and, in due course, the delivery date of the draft report.

I have requested the submission of a response to the matter raised above by **14 April 2022**, although an earlier response would be much appreciated.

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 Borough Council websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Your sincerely

Wendy Burden

Examiner