

## **Dickleburgh & Rushall Neighbourhood Plan - Decision Statement**

### **1. Summary**

Following an independent examination, South Norfolk Council have received the examiner's report relating to the Dickleburgh & Rushall Neighbourhood Plan. The report makes a number of recommendations for making modifications to policies within the Neighbourhood Plan. South Norfolk Council has made a decision to approve each of the examiner's recommendations and to allow the Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to a referendum within the neighbourhood area.

### **2. Background**

Following the submission of the Dickleburgh & Rushall Neighbourhood Plan to South Norfolk Council in January 2025, the Neighbourhood Plan was published in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and representations invited. The publication period took place between 24<sup>th</sup> February and 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

South Norfolk Council, with the approval of Dickleburgh & Rushall Parish Council (the Qualifying Body), subsequently appointed an independent examiner (Mr Andrew Ashcroft) to conduct an examination of the submitted Neighbourhood Plan and conclude as to whether it meets the Basic Conditions (as defined by Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) and consequently whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. The examination incorporated a Hearing, which took place on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

The examiner's report was published on 22<sup>nd</sup> December and concludes that, subject to making certain recommended modifications, the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions for neighbourhood planning and should proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning referendum within the adopted neighbourhood area.

### **3. Decision**

Having considered each of the recommendations in the examiner's report and the reasons for them, South Norfolk Council has decided to approve each of the examiner's recommended modifications. This is in accordance with section 12 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Council considers that this decision will ensure the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions.

The following table sets out the examiner's recommended modifications, the Council's consideration of those recommendations, and its decision in relation to each recommendation.

Subject to the modifications set out in the table below, the Council is satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum within the neighbourhood area, in accordance with part 12(4) of Schedule 4B of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

Section	Examiner's recommendation	Consideration of recommendation	LPAs decision
Policy DR1: Heritage	<p><b>Delete the second part of the policy.</b></p> <p><b>Replace the third part of the policy with:</b></p> <p><b>'As appropriate to their scale and nature and location, development proposals should respond positively to heritage assets in the neighbourhood area. Proposals affecting heritage assets, should address</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. The character, distinctiveness, and important features.</b></li> <li><b>b. The setting and its relationship to its immediate surroundings.</b></li> <li><b>c. The contribution that the heritage asset makes to the character of the area.'</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Delete paragraphs 4.10 to 4.15</i></p> <p><i>Delete Figure 11</i></p>	<p>The Council agrees with the examiner that references to the 'Historic Core' should be deleted, as this has not been defined objectively. In addition, the Council supports the amendments to the remaining wording to ensure it can be applied proportionately.</p>	<p>Make the modifications, as recommended.</p>
Policy DR2: Archaeology	<p><b>Delete the policy</b></p> <p><i>Delete paragraphs 4.20 to 4.27 (and Reasoned Justification/Additional Justification Boxes)</i></p>	<p>The Council supports the conclusion that the policy does not bring any added value to details that are already captured in national policy.</p>	<p>Delete the policy, as recommended.</p>

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Policy DR3: Views and vistas	<p><b>Replace the policy with:</b></p> <p><b>'As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should respect their landscape setting.</b></p> <p><b>The following views are identified as important in the parish (as shown on Figures 18 and 25). [List the views]</b></p> <p><b>Development proposals within or affecting an important local view should demonstrate how they have responded positively to the view concerned and safeguarded its integrity and local importance.'</b></p>	The Council agrees that the modifications will ensure the policy is clearer for decision makers and avoids repetition.	Make the modifications, as recommended.
Policy DR4: Settlement Gaps	<p><b>Delete the policy</b></p> <p><i>Delete paragraphs 4.43 to 4.53</i></p> <p><i>Delete Figure 32</i></p>	The Council supports the conclusion of the examiner that the policy does not meet the basic conditions and that it constitutes an unjustified barrier to sustainable development in the parish.	Delete the policy, as recommended.

<p>Policy DR5: Local Gaps</p>	<p><b>Delete the policy.</b></p> <p><i>Delete paragraphs 4.54 to 4.58</i></p> <p><i>Delete Figures 33-36</i></p> <p><b>Include a replacement policy (for Policies DR4 and DR5) to read:</b></p> <p><b>Development Pattern</b></p> <p><b>‘The countryside in the parish will be protected from intrusive development. Development proposals should respond positively to the distinctive settlement pattern of the neighbourhood area and safeguard the physical distinction between Dickleburgh and the surrounding, isolated groups of development.</b></p> <p><b>Development proposals that would result in an unacceptable reduction in the existing physical distinction of Dickleburgh with either Dickleburgh Moor (to the north of the development boundary) or Langmere (to the east of the settlement boundary) will not be supported.</b></p> <p>Include replacement supporting text to read:</p> <p><b><i>‘The development pattern in the neighbourhood area</i></b></p> <p><i>The distribution of built development is a key element of the character of the parish. Dickleburgh is a nucleated settlement and represents its principal concentration of built development. Rushall to the east is a hamlet which has a clear format. Within this overall context, other smaller areas of built development are found at Langmere (to the east of Dickleburgh) and at Dickleburgh Moor on the Norwich Road (to the north of Dickleburgh). In combination this provides a characteristically rural distribution of development which results in the separation of the areas of built development.</i></p>	<p>The Council agrees with the examiner that policy DR5 seeks to exercise an unnecessary degree of control on development on the edge of the principal settlements, beyond that which is already in place within the Local Plan.</p> <p>The Council supports the inclusion of replacement policy, ‘Development Pattern’, which acknowledges the community’s aspiration to ensure that the separation of Dickleburgh from other elements of built development within the parish continues through the Plan period.</p>	<p>Delete Policy DR5: Local Gaps and introduce a new policy (‘Development Pattern’), as recommended.</p>
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	<p><i>There is a clear demand, as expressed through the consultation process within the parish, that the Plan should ensure the protection of key parish assets, to preserve and maintain the identity and character of the separate area of built development.</i></p> <p><i>Maintaining the separation of built development will preserve and protect avian and mammal corridors (Green Corridors) through and around settlements. It will maintain the dark sky objective and define the edges of dominant human habitation.</i></p> <p><i>The distinctive pattern of development in the neighbourhood area provides essential views of the important natural features within the parish and assist in maintaining the beauty and integrity of the natural environment, setting the human settlements within the historic and economic context of the landscape. Views of open countryside and fresh air have been demonstrated to have a positive impact upon well-being, and mental health and the maintenance and protection of the separate areas of built development will go some way in assisting the well-being of the residents in the parish.'</i></p>		
Policy DR6: Heritage ditches, hedges, and verges	<p><b>Replace the policy with:</b></p> <p><b>'As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should seek to safeguard and enhance the existing network of ditches, hedges, and verges.'</b></p> <p><i>Replace paragraph 4.65 with: 'Ditches, hedges and verges identified on the 1884 map of Dickleburgh and Rushall, and which still exist today (figure 44), are recognised as locally important in terms of their heritage and biodiversity value. In the context of the Hedgerow Regulation these features should not be compromised.'</i></p>	The Council agrees that these modifications will bring greater clarity to the policy, ensuring that it does not duplicate related legislation, and will enable it to be applied proportionately.	Make the modifications, as recommended.

<p>Policy DR7: Design</p>	<p><b>Replace the second paragraph of the policy with: ‘Development proposals should respond positively to the relevant parts of the Dickleburgh and Rushall Neighbourhood Plan Housing Design and Character Guide (Appendix A).’</b></p> <p><b>Replace the third part of the policy with: ‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals for new housing development should meet the following criteria:’</b></p> <p><b>In the third part of the policy:</b></p> <p><b>Replace criterion 2 with: ‘the density of the development should reflect that of the surrounding area whilst making the best use of land.’</b></p> <p><b>Replace criterion 4 with: ‘roof pitches should reflect those on adjacent properties whilst providing a degree of informality which is a characteristic of the rural character of the settlement’</b></p> <p><b>Delete criterion 6.</b></p> <p><b>Replace criterion 7 with: ‘the size of garden should naturally relate to the size of the plot/application site concerned and, where practicable, be arranged to complement the relationship between the village and the surrounding countryside.</b></p> <p><b>Delete criterion 8.</b></p> <p><b>Replace criterion 10 with: ‘Wherever practicable development proposals should comply with Secured by Design Principles’</b></p> <p><b>Delete criterion 11.</b></p> <p><b>In criterion 12 replace ‘All development plans should have due regard’ with ‘Development proposals should have regard’</b></p> <p><i>Delete paragraph 5.17 and Figure 45</i></p>	<p>The Council supports the examiner’s recommended modifications, as some of the criteria go beyond what is reasonable and/or are too restrictive.</p>	<p>Make the modifications, as recommended.</p>
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<p>Policy DR8: Local Housing Need</p>	<p><b>Replace the policy with:</b></p> <p><b>‘Development proposals that would deliver ten or more homes should provide a range and mix of housing sizes, to meet the housing needs of the parish</b></p> <p><b>Where it is commercially-viable to do so, the mix of new housing should be provided in accordance with current and future local needs identified in the most up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment.’</b></p> <p><i>Replace paragraph 5.31 with:</i></p> <p><i>‘Delivering a wide choice of high-quality homes is essential to support a sustainable, mixed, and inclusive community. There is a demand for a range of property sizes and types to meet the current needs of the community, along with suitable accommodation to meet changing needs of some older residents. Policy DR8 looks to support the approach taken in the South Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2017 (and as updated in 2019). In this broader context the Parish Council would welcome the delivery of the following house types in new developments in the Plan period:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Housing suitable for older people and those with disabilities, including bungalows;</i></li> <li><i>• Smaller homes;</i></li> <li><i>• First Homes;</i></li> <li><i>• Affordable Housing, as part of a mixed development; and</i></li> <li><i>• Custom-build properties.’</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Replace paragraph 5.32 with:</i></p> <p><i>‘The Neighbourhood Plan supports an appropriate level of affordable housing for rent. All future development must comply with the national and district guidelines for the percentage of affordable housing as defined at the time of the implementation of a development. The Neighbourhood Plan supports South Norfolk District Council’s adopted</i></p>	<p>The Council agrees with the examiner’s modifications on the basis that the policy wording does not offer clear guidance for developers or decision makers.</p>	<p>Make the modifications, as recommended.</p>
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	<i>standard cascade format. In this context the Parish Council notes South Norfolk Council's approach that all affordable homes for rent via Section 106 obligations will have a local priority.'</i>		
Policy DR10: Parking for the building of new houses or conversions	<p><b>Delete the first sentence of the first part of the policy.</b></p> <p><b>Replace the second and third parts of the policy with:</b></p> <p><b>'Where meeting these standards is neither feasible nor practicable, provision for any deficiency may be achieved by provision of car spaces adjacent to the relevant dwellings in small car parks and, within streets designed to safely accommodate such parking. Overall car parking levels should meet Norfolk County Council's 'Parking Guidelines for new developments as a minimum.</b></p> <p><b>All car parking should be arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place or amenity of adjoining properties and where possible it should be softened by planting.'</b></p>	The Council is supportive of the examiner's modifications as they will ensure the policy has the necessary clarity for developers and decision makers.	Make the modifications, as recommended.
Policy DR11: Water harvesting	<p><b>Replace the policy with:</b></p> <p><b>'As appropriate to their scale and nature, development proposals should make use of on-site grey water harvesting inside the building for water use that does not require purified water for drinking. This should be designed into the new development from the outset.</b></p> <p><b>Where this approach is not practicable, more ambitious water efficiency standards should be included to help reduce potable water use in new homes to 100 litres per person per day through a 'fixtures and fittings'-based approach, in line with the Environment Improvement Plan Roadmap to Water Efficiency new standard for new homes in England.'</b></p>	The Council agrees that the recommended modifications will make the policy clearer and more proportionate.	Make the modifications, as recommended.



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Policy DR12: Flooding and surface water drainage issues	<p><b>In the second part of the policy delete the second sentence.</b></p> <p><b>Replace the final part of the policy with:</b></p> <p><b>‘The planting of trees, hedges and grasslands, and the creation of ponds, ditches and swales should be used as the method of enabling water absorption and drainage unless site specific conditions require an alternative approach.’</b></p> <p><i>At the end of paragraph 5.58 add the deleted second sentence from the second part of the policy</i></p>	The Council agrees that these modifications will bring the clarity to the policy that is required by the NPPF.	Make the modifications, as recommended.
Policy DR13: Cordon Sanitaire	<p><b>Delete the policy</b></p> <p><i>Delete paragraph 5.60 and Figures 51 and 52.</i></p>	The Council agrees with the examiner's concerns that the policy would have the clear ability to frustrate proposals which would otherwise constitute sustainable development, thus rendering it incompatible with the NPPF. The Council supports the deletion of the policy.	Make the modifications, as recommended.
Policy DR14: Carbon offsetting for new builds	<p><b>Replace the policy with: ‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should incorporate the following climate change mitigation measures: [list a-f from the submitted policy]</b></p> <p><i>At the end of paragraph 5.61 add: ‘In this context Dickleburgh and Rushall parish will work towards becoming a low carbon community.’</i></p>	The Council agrees that the modifications will result in a clearer policy.	Make the modifications, as recommended.

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Policy DR15: Local traffic Generation	<p><b>Replace the policy with:</b></p> <p><b>‘Development proposals should quantify the level of traffic movement they would generate and their cumulative effect on traffic flow.</b></p> <p><b>Where necessary, development proposals should incorporate mitigation measures to manage the impact of the development on road safety, pedestrian movement, cycle safety, horse riders, parking, and traffic flow.’</b></p> <p><i>At the end of paragraph 6.8 add:</i></p> <p><i>‘Policy 15 comments about the potential need for development proposals to mitigate their effects on the local highways network. Mitigation measures could include traffic calming, changes to road layout, pavement improvements and crossing points.’</i></p>	<p>The Council supports the conclusions of the examiner that (on the basis of limited evidence) a more general approach to the assessment of traffic impact would enable the policy to meet the basic conditions.</p>	<p>Make the modifications, as recommended.</p>
Policy DR16: walking, cycling and horse-riding	<p><b>Replace ‘Footpaths and cycle ways should be visible, use permeable material and be green under foot. They should be separate from roads where possible’ with ‘Footpaths and cycle ways should use permeable materials and should be separate from any adjacent and associated roads where practicable.’</b></p> <p><b>Delete the final part of the policy.</b></p>	<p>The Council agrees that these modifications are necessary to ensure that the policy is clear and that it only deals with land use planning matters.</p>	<p>Make the modifications, as recommended.</p>

<p>Policy DR17: Green corridors</p>	<p><b>Replace the first part of the policy with:</b></p> <p><b>‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should retain, protect and, where practicable, enhance existing green corridors (as shown on figures 59, 61 and 62) and respond positively to the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy.’</b></p> <p><b>Replace the second part of the policy with:</b></p> <p><b>‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should demonstrate how they will support the green corridor network and contribute to biodiversity net gain. As appropriate to the development concerned, this could be achieved through the following:’</b></p> <p><b>Delete the third part of the policy.</b></p> <p><b>Replace the fourth part of the policy with:</b></p> <p><b>‘Wherever it is practicable to do so, new roads should be built with open ditches, green verges and hedges designed and positioned to support wildlife and biodiversity.’</b></p> <p><i>Replace paragraph 7.16 with:</i></p> <p><i>‘Developers should consider biodiversity net gain early in the development process and factor it into site selection and design. Where appropriate, they should discuss the biodiversity net gain requirements for their development with South Norfolk Council. In addition, there are minimum national information requirements related to biodiversity net gain. These requirements will allow consideration of existing habitat baselines for relevant applications so there is a common understanding about the pre-development biodiversity value of the development’s onsite habitat at this stage. Where appropriate developers should provide a detailed and budgeted plan to evidence how biodiversity net gain will be sustained over the longer term (a minimum of 10 years).’</i></p>	<p>The Council agrees that these modifications are required to ensure the policy has the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow the Council to properly apply the policy in the development management process.</p>	<p>Make the modifications, as recommended.</p>
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Policy DR18: Local Green Spaces	<p><b>Delete LGS G</b></p> <p><i>Delete LGS G from Figure 63</i></p> <p><i>In paragraph 7.36 replace the final sentence with: 'The proposed local green spaces have been assessed principally against the guidance in Section 8 of the NPPF. The Parish Council has also used general information provided by the Open Spaces Society to supplement the NPPF tests.'</i></p>	The Council agrees with the examiner's modification on the basis that Local Green Space 'G' would not seem to meet the requirement of being 'demonstrably special', as required by the NPPF.	Make the modifications, as recommended.
Policy DR19: Dark Skies	<p><b>Replace the policy with:</b></p> <p><b>'Development proposals should take account of the parish's existing dark skies Light Management Plan (Appendix F) and limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light (figure 64 and 65).</b></p> <p><b>For individual dwellings, lighting necessary for security or safety should be designed to minimise the impact on dark skies by, for example, minimal light spillage, use of down lighting, movement sensitive lighting and restricting hours of lighting.</b></p> <p><b>Lighting that would cause unacceptable disturbance or risk to wildlife will not be supported.'</b></p>	The Council supports the examiner's modifications on the basis that the policy elements, as currently worded, are too restrictive.	Make the modifications, as recommended.
Policy DR20: Allocation	<p><b>Delete the policy</b></p> <p><i>Delete paragraphs 8.1 to 8.12 and Figure 66.</i></p>	The Council supports the recommendation of the examiner to delete the policy, principally on the basis of the proposed density (which would not make efficient use of land) and highways access issues.	Delete the policy, as recommended.

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Other Matters - General	<p><i>Modification of general text (where necessary) to achieve consistency with the modified policies and to accommodate any administrative and technical changes.</i></p>	<p>As the examiner states, other changes to the general text may be required elsewhere in the Plan because of the recommended modifications to the policies. Similarly, changes may be necessary to paragraph numbers in the Plan or to accommodate other administrative matters. It will be appropriate for SNC and DRPC to have the flexibility to make any necessary consequential changes to the general text.</p>	<p>Make any necessary, general text modifications, as required.</p>
Other Matters – Specific	<p>I recommend a series of other more general modifications based on SNC's more general comments. I use the SNC reference system as used in its initial representation on the Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 1</li> <li>• Paragraph 4.31</li> <li>• Figure 40</li> <li>• Paragraph 4.65</li> </ul>	<p>The Council supports this recommendation.</p>	<p>Make the modifications, as recommended.</p>

#### 4. Next Steps

This Decision Statement and the examiner's report into the Dickleburgh & Rushall Neighbourhood Plan will be made available online at:

[www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plans](http://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plans)

*N.B. Navigate to 'Emerging Neighbourhood Plans in South Norfolk' followed by 'Dickleburgh & Rushall Neighbourhood Plan'.*

Printed copies of these documents have also been deposited at the following locations, where they can be viewed on request during normal opening hours:

- **Dickleburgh & Rushall Village Centre**, Harvey Lane, Dickleburgh, IP21 4NL (viewing by appointment at the following times - Mon: 10am-12pm, 2-4pm; Tues: 1-3pm; Thurs: 9.30am-12.30pm, 3-5pm; Fri: 2-4pm. Please contact 01379 742937)
- **Diss Library**, Church Street, Diss, IP22 4DD (Staffed Mon & Wed-Fri: 10am-7pm; Sat: 10am-4pm)
- **South Norfolk Council**, The Horizon Centre, Broadland Business Park, Peachman Way, Norwich, NR7 0WF (Mon-Fri: 8.30am-5pm)

South Norfolk Council is satisfied that, with the approved modifications as detailed above, the Dickleburgh & Rushall Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum within the neighbourhood area, in which the following question will be posed:

**'Do you want South Norfolk Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Dickleburgh and Rushall to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'**

Further information relating to the referendum will be published in due course by South Norfolk Council.