

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE NEWTON FLOTMAN

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024-2038

EXAMINER: DEREK STEBBING BA (Hons) DipEP MRTPI

Paul Weeks
Chair, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Newton Flotman Parish Council

Iolo Jones
Community Planning Officer
South Norfolk Council

Examination Ref: 01/DAS/NFNP

6 May 2025

Dear Mr Weeks and Mr Jones

NEWTON FLOTMAN NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMINATION

Following the submission of the Newton Flotman Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) for examination, I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters. I also have a number of questions for the Newton Flotman Parish Council (the Qualifying Body) and South Norfolk Council (the District Council), to which I would like to receive a written response(s) by **Friday 30 May 2025** if possible.

1. Examination Documentation

I can confirm that I am satisfied that I have received the draft Plan and accompanying documentation, including the Basic Conditions Statement, the Consultation Statement, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report and the Regulation 16 representations, to enable me to undertake the examination.

2. Site Visit

I will aim to carry out a site visit to the neighbourhood plan area during the week beginning 19 May 2025. 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 may have some additional questions, following my site visit, which I will set out in writing should I require any further clarification.

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

From my initial assessment of the Plan and supporting documents, I have identified a number of matters where I require some additional information from the District Council and the Parish Council.

I have five 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(s) by **Friday 30 May 2025**.

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 6-8 weeks of submission of the draft Plan. However, as I have raised several questions, I must provide you with sufficient opportunity to reply. Consequentially, dependent on the timing of your response(s), the examination timetable may be extended. Should any delay arise, please be assured that I will aim to mitigate this 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 that a copy of this letter is placed on the Parish Council and District Council websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Derek Stebbing

Examiner

ANNEX

From my initial reading of the Newton Flotman Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2038 (Submission Version dated February 2025), the supporting evidence and the representations that have been made to the Plan, I have the following five questions for the Qualifying Body and the District Council. I have requested the submission of responses **by Friday 30 May 2025**, although an earlier response would be much appreciated.

All of the points set out below flow from the requirement to satisfy the Basic Conditions.

Question 1: Re. South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (VCHAP) (Pages 11 and 12)

Can the **District Council** please confirm the accuracy of the information set out at paragraphs 2.16 and 2.17, including Figure 5, in the draft Plan regarding the emerging VCHAP, and further provide me with additional details of the planning permission for 31 dwellings that has been granted for the development of Site VC NEW2 that is referenced at paragraphs 2.17 and 5.22 in the draft Plan.

Can the **District Council** please also advise me of the approved housing mix for the development of Site VC NEW2, including the quantum and percentage of Affordable Housing?

Finally, I would be grateful if the **District Council** can advise me of any further planning applications for residential development that may have been submitted on sites within the Neighbourhood Area since the submission of the draft Plan in February 2025?

Response from South Norfolk Council:

[Paragraphs 2.16 and 2.17 summarize the information set out by SNC on its VCHAP webpage: South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan | Broadland and South Norfolk](#)

[The VCHAP is due to be submitted for examination in August 2025 and intended for adoption in April/May 2026. Details of the site allocations in Newton Flotman can be found in the Regulation 19 version of the plan via the historic consultation documents links.](#)

[Site VC NEW2 had a full planning application for 31 units approved on 4 March 2025. For further information about the application, search using the reference 2021/2784 on our website: Find a planning application | Broadland and South Norfolk](#)

[At the initial planning committee meeting on 24 May 2022, members adopted a resolution to grant permission on the basis of 7 affordable housing units being delivered. In light of updated viability evidence, two revised proposals were approved at subsequent meetings on 14 November 2023 and 24 July 2024 to reduce the number of affordable units on site. Subsequently, only 2 of the 31 units will be shared ownership, with the remainder being open market housing.](#)

[Two Approval of Condition applications have been received for 2021/2784 since February 2025: 2025/0902: Details of Conditions 9, 10, 12, 17 & 18 of 2021/2784 - \(9\) Noise and Dust Management Plan, \(10\) Written Scheme of Investigation, \(12\) Ecological Mitigation Plan, \(17\) Onsite Construction Parking, \(18\) Traffic Management Plan. 2025/0903: Details of conditions 15 & 21 of 2021/2784 - \(15\) roads/footways/cycleways/street lighting/foul and surface water sewers & \(21\) off-site highway improvement works.](#)

[The following residential applications have also been received since February 2025: 2025/0664: Front porch, extension to the rear of the garage, rear single storey extension. 2025/0712: Garage conversion to annexe. 2025/0851: Rear extension to detached garage and part conversion to form bedroom. 2025/1002: Erection of two storey extension.](#)

Question 2: Re. Policy NF6 – Existing and New Community Infrastructure (Pages 38 and 39)

As drafted, the final section of this Policy suggests that the community infrastructure listed as clauses a)-i) will be supported regardless of any other planning considerations. It therefore does not provide any effective guidance for development management purposes. Conversely, the preceding two parts of the Policy set criteria for the support of proposals affecting existing community infrastructure.

In my preliminary assessment, the siting and location of at least some of the potential new community infrastructure will require compliance with other development plan policies and an assessment of possible impacts upon other local amenities, including residential amenity. I also note that Section 9 of the draft Plan, which identifies possible community action projects, advises that *“there is some overlap with Policy NF6”*.

In my assessment, there should be no overlap between Policy NF6 and the possible community action projects, which are clearly aspirational at this stage and will be subject to further investigation.

Can the **Qualifying Body** therefore please review the final section of the Policy and provide me with a Note setting out possible revisions to the Policy text that address the matters that I have identified above?

Response from QB: Suggest removing from policy as most are in the Community Action Projects list (chapter 9). Need to add ‘Recreation/sports areas, e.g. outside gym and tennis court’ to the list in chapter 9. Remove ‘Note: there is some overlap with Policy NF6’ from bottom of Chapter 9 page. Also add into supporting text for Policy NF6 that there is a Community Action Projects list in Chapter 9.

Question 3: Re. Policy NF9 – Natural Assets and Biodiversity (Pages 46 and 47)

As drafted, the first part of this Policy includes a wide range of important natural assets which should be conserved and enhanced where possible. It is possible to identify the location of some of these assets by reference to Figures 31 and 32, and also to some of the information in Section 6 of the Data Profile (March 2024). However, some of the natural assets, such as field hedgerows and Roadside Nature Reserves, cannot be identified.

In view of the stated importance of these assets because of their landscape and/or biodiversity value, I consider that greater detail is required on such assets, particularly regarding their location, for the benefit of future users of the Plan. I note that paragraph 8.2 states that these *“have come from the knowledge of Newton Flotman residents and consultation”*. I also note that two Roadside Nature Reserves are proposed for designation as Local Green Spaces in Policy NF10. I further note that the District Council considers that this part of the Policy would be better placed as supporting text.

Can the **Qualifying Body** therefore please review this part of Policy NF9 and provide me with a Note setting out further information and details on those natural assets which are not readily identifiable within paragraphs 8.2-8.6 of the supporting text or on Figures 31 and 32?

The Qualifying Body may also wish to take account of the representation submitted by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust (**Ref. NF/NP-07**) which provides some additional information that is not presently included within the draft Plan.

Response from QB on natural assets listed in Policy NF9:

1. Woodlands information provided in figure 32
2. River Tas on maps of the parish: could provide a separate map if needed
3. Ponds and ghost ponds: could provide a separate map if needed for ponds. The QB knows of some ghosts ponds
4. Field hedgerow: aerial photograph map (as below). If this is not sufficient, they could be mapped, or could draw on Norfolk County Council map (<https://norfolkcc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=bc454c4b70bc481fbc7bf11adeea099>)
5. Drainage ditches: identified in the policy
6. Roadside Nature Reserves: Newton Greenways and Pound Lane – these are identified as Local Green Spaces, therefore could be removed from Policy NF9
7. County Wildlife Sites: could provide a separate map if needed

The QB will be guided by the Examiner on appropriate additional information from Norfolk Wildlife Trust.



Question 4: Re. Local Green Spaces (Pages 48-59)

In the assessment of the proposed Local Green Spaces, the addresses of Sites 1 and 6 (on pages 48 and 51) are missing from the specific site assessments. It is clear that these should be the 'Alan Avenue green space' and 'Kings Green' respectively, but I would be grateful for the **Qualifying Body's** confirmation of that point.

I also consider that there should be more precise addresses for Sites 10 and 11, rather than the present descriptions. I would be grateful if the **Qualifying Body** can consider that matter and provide more suitable descriptors.

Response from QB: The following tables did not read properly when PDF'd, should read as follows

1. Alan Avenue green space

Description: formal fenced green space at Alan Avenue.
(South Norfolk Council asset reference NFL0006A acquired in 2005. Title reference NK320668)

In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	Located in the main built-up areas, surrounded by the Alan Avenue development.
Demonstrably special	Recreation, communal and amenity value due to the undeveloped nature within the residential development; used as a play space by local children.
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	Not an extensive tract of land.



6. Kings Green

Description: Kings green is the village green for Newton Flotman which consists of a grass area and a range of trees including oak that is well established, commemorative trees for the Queen's jubilee events and a group of new trees that were planted in 2021.

In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves

The green is surrounded by housing on two sides (Short Street and Flordon Road) and the main trunk road between Norwich and Ipswich (A140) on the third side. It is close to the community as most residents pass the green when they are traveling around or through the village.

Demonstrably special

Kings green holds a particular significance for the village as it is one of the main green spaces in the village. The area is laid to grass with some well-established tree species – Oak, Beech and Norway Maple – present. Cherry, field maple lime, oak and hornbeam trees were planted on the green in January 2022. The area has been rewilded in the last two years which has encouraged wildlife and wildflowers to grow. Recreationally, residents regularly walk around the green and there is a bench where people sit for relaxation and contemplation when they are out for a walk.

Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land

The green is local and not an extensive tract of land.



Response from QB:

- **Local Green Space 10:** should read 'Small triangle of grass with noticeboard beside the school gates, on School Road'
- **Local Green Space 11:** should read 'Vehicle and pedestrian access to the allotments, from Exchange Road'

Also, Local Green Space 16 needs clarification:

- Title in policy and assessment tables should read 'Roadside Nature Reserves at Pound Lane (RNR190) and Greenways (RNR191)'.
- The description should be: verges on Pound Lane (RNR190) and Greenways from Newton Greenways towards Church Farm (RNR191)
- In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves: Also, 'Greenways stretches from Maplewood towards Greenways Farm'

- **Demonstrably special:** Amend to say, 'A single carriageway lane used by motor vehicles to access Mulbarton. At Greenways Norfolk Wildlife Trust have documented sulphur clover, a rare and unusual plant. At Pound Lane they have documented pepper saxifrage, another classic plant of roadside verges'.
- **Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land:** Amend to say, 'Not an extensive tract of land'.

Question 5: Re Policy NF13 – Localised Flooding (Page 65)

In the copy of the draft Plan that has been supplied to me, the third paragraph of draft Policy text is incomplete. Can the **Qualifying Body** please provide me with the full text of the proposed Policy that should be the subject of this Examination?

Response from QB: The end of the policy is covered by the photograph (on page 66). It should be shown as follows

POLICY NF13: Localised flooding

Development proposals within the immediate locality of the areas identified below as having surface water drainage issues, should take account of all relevant evidence of flooding. Development must not cause or contribute to new flooding or drainage issues and should mitigate its own flooding and drainage impacts.

There are a number of locations that have surface water drainage issues. The following locations within the parish (figure 38) are identified:

1. Joy Avenue
2. Dell Close
3. Church Road
4. St Mary's Close down to the bus stop
5. Alan Avenue, onto Flordon Road
6. Flordon Road coming off field track
7. Waterside Gardens

All new development including minor development, is required to use an appropriate Sustainable urban Drainage System (SuDS) which will mitigate and protect against pollution, provide drainage and wider amenity, recreational and biodiversity benefits commensurate with the size of the development (see Newton Flotman Design Guidance and Codes).

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