

Hingham Neighbourhood Development Plan - Proposed Modifications to Policy HING9: Allocation of land for community uses

Examination Arrangements

Purpose of this Note

This Note sets out the basis on which the examination of the proposed modifications to Policy HING9 of the Plan will be undertaken. Its ambitions are two-fold:

- to comply with the NPIERS Guidance for service users and examiners (April 2018); and
- to provide guidance on the key stages of the examination.

The examination route map

Different examinations raise their own issues. Nevertheless, the examination will have the following the key stages:

Stage 1: Background Reading

This involves reading the proposed modifications, the supporting documents, and the various representations. I will take all this information into account when preparing my report. This stage also includes an initial check that all the necessary procedures have been followed.

Stage 1 of the examination has now started.

Stage 2: Visit to the neighbourhood area

The visit will be focused on the issues that have arisen either from the background reading and/or which are fundamental to the examination.

The visit will be unaccompanied. I will not meet with representatives of the Town Council, South Norfolk Council or any of the parties who have commented on the Plan.

I will visit the neighbourhood area next week.

Stage 3: Clarification Note

I will send a clarification note shortly after the visit. It will raise a series of questions for the Town Council and the District Council on the proposed modifications to Policy HING9. The answers to the questions will help me to understand the matter better and, where necessary, to recommend modifications to ensure that the policy meets the basic conditions. The Note will also provide an opportunity for the Town Council to respond to the representations received.

The clarification note will suggest a timescale for responses. However, this is a matter which I am happy should proceed at whatever pace is determined locally. This acknowledges that work on neighbourhood plans is carried out by local councils and individuals on a voluntary basis.

Stage 4: Decision about the need for a hearing

The combination of the background reading, the unaccompanied visit and the responses to the clarification note will allow me to come to a view about the need or otherwise for a hearing

as part of the examination process. The legislation anticipates that most examinations can proceed by way of written representations and without a hearing.

If a hearing is required, I will ask South Norfolk Council to make the necessary arrangements.

Stage 5: The Examination Report

The report will be prepared throughout the examination period. Its general parts can be written early in the process. The elements of the report that overlap with the clarification note will not be prepared until the responses to the note are received. These arrangements would also apply if a hearing was required.

I will prepare a fact check report before the final report. This will give an opportunity for the Town Council and South Norfolk Council to comment on any factual inaccuracies and/or omissions within the report. It will not present an opportunity for the examination to enter another phase.

Other related matters

The timing of the examination

Plainly different plans cover different issues. Neighbourhood plan examinations are inevitably linear and are directly affected by the number of policies and the number and complexity of the representations received.

In the case of this examination, I anticipate being able to send the fact check report by mid-August 2025. The exact timing will be influenced by the nature of the responses to the clarification note and/or the potential organisation of a hearing.

Documents

I have asked South Norfolk Council to continue to display all examination-related documents on its website.

Contact arrangements

My principal contact for the examination will be Richard Squires at South Norfolk Council. In most cases, I will ask Richard to send documents to the Town Council on my behalf.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

Hingham Neighbourhood Development Plan - Proposed Modifications

30 June 2025