

Broadland District Council & Broads Authority

Reedham Neighbourhood Plan - Decision Statement

1. Summary

Following an independent examination, Broadland District Council & the Broads Authority have received the examiner's report relating to the Reedham Neighbourhood Plan. The report makes a number of recommendations for making modifications to policies within the Neighbourhood Plan. Broadland District Council & the Broads Authority have 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 Reedham Neighbourhood Plan to Broadland District Council & the Broads Authority in August 2023, 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 18th October and 29th November 2023.

The local planning authorities, with the approval of Reedham Parish Council, 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 examiner's report 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, Broadland District Council & the Broads Authority have 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 this decision will ensure that 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 the Council's decision in relation to each recommendation.

Subject to the modifications approved by Broadland District Council & the Broads Authority, as 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	Council consideration of recommendation	Council decision
Policy 1	Delete the policy <i>Delete paragraphs 39-42 and Figures 6 and 7</i>	In his reasoning, the examiner noted that the policy has a hybrid format based around its two related parts. He noted that whilst Middle field provides a high degree of separation between parts of the village, there was no evidence to justify the approach in the policy that it should remain open to maintain the distinction between the different elements of the village nor was there evidence that the field was assessed as a Local Green Space. There were also no costed proposals for the development of community facilities and no direct support from the owner of the field. On this basis, the Council is satisfied with this amendment.	Accept examiner's recommended modifications.

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Policy 2	Replace the policy with: ‘Development proposals for residential use should reflect local housing need using the best available and proportionate evidence, including the Reedham Housing Need Assessment (2020). Other than for self-build plots and conversions, new residential developments should consist of at least 80% of homes that are three-bedrooms or fewer, unless evidence is provided either showing there is no longer such a local need or that a different mix of house sizes is required to ensure that the development is commercially-viable.’	The Council agrees with the examiner that this amendment will help to improve the precision and clarity of the Neighbourhood Plan.	Accept examiner's recommended modification.
Policy 3	Replace ‘will’ with ‘should’	The Council is satisfied that this amendment will help to improve the clarity of the Neighbourhood Plan.	Accept examiner's recommended modification.
Policy 4	Replace ‘All new built development, including extensions, are expected to be consistent with’ with: ‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, new built development should respond positively to’	The Council is satisfied that this amendment will help to improve the clarity of the Neighbourhood Plan.	Accept examiner's recommended modification.

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Policy 5	Delete the policy <i>Delete paragraph 71</i>	Whilst the examiner appreciated RPC's intentions, given that the site has been removed from the emerging local plan, he concluded that there is no need for a policy of this nature in the neighbourhood plan and as such recommend that the policy and the supporting text are deleted. The Council is satisfied with this amendment.	Accept examiner's recommended modification.
Policy 6	In the initial section of the policy replace the second paragraph with: 'Parking areas and driveways should incorporate sustainable drainage systems and use permeable surfaces to minimise surface water runoff.' In the section on 'Courtyard and Garage parking' delete the second sentence (on the size of garages) <i>At the end of paragraph 72 add: 'The contents of Policy 6 on sustainable drainage overlap with the contents of Policy 11 (Flood and Surface Water Management). Developers should address both policies in their preparation of development proposals.'</i>	This modification addresses the Council's concern that the policy was not consistent with Norfolk County Council's 'Parking Guidelines for New Development in Norfolk' document, as well as addressing further issues of clarity. The Council agrees with these modifications.	Accept examiner's recommended modification.

Policy 7	Replace the opening element of the first part of the policy with: ‘Development proposals which will result in an increase in developed floor space should demonstrate at least a 10% net gain in biodiversity, using the most up-to-date metric. As appropriate to the scale, nature and location of the development proposal concerned, the net gain in biodiversity may be achieved in the following ways: [at this point include a-h from the submitted policy] Replace the remainder of the policy with: ‘Where practicable and feasible, development proposals should incorporate wildlife features and enhancements within their landscaping proposals. Wherever practicable, development proposals should incorporate existing hedgerow and trees into their layouts. Proposals that would affect trees or hedgerow should be accompanied by a survey to establish the health and age of affected trees and/or hedgerow, and appropriate management plans. Where development proposals would result in the loss of trees or hedgerows, appropriate replacement provision of greater value than the trees or hedgerows lost should be provided. Any replacement species should be native British species and of local provenance. Development proposals to improve green infrastructure links to the Wherrymans Way Long Distance Trail, the Broads and other permissive paths will be supported where they comply with other development policies. Wherever practicable, any such proposals should incorporate community access to these features.’ <i>Replace the title of the policy with ‘The Natural Environment and Biodiversity’</i>	The Council is satisfied that this amendment will help to improve the clarity of the Neighbourhood Plan.	Accept examiner’s recommended modification.
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	<i>In paragraph 83 delete 'Para 174 supports the mapping of ecological assets and networks, including for enhancement or creation. NPPF paras 96 -101 covers protecting existing green open spaces and creation of new ones.'</i> <i>Replace paragraph 84 with:</i> <i>'The Environment Act (2021) requires all development schemes to deliver a mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) to be maintained for a period of at least 30 years. The concept seeks measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development. Development proposals must 'leave biodiversity in a better state than before'. BNG has been a requirement since February 2024. The requirement will only affect nationally important infrastructure sites from November 2025. There are three ways to deliver BNG. The first is onsite within the site curtilage. The second is off site locally with biodiversity enhanced in conjunction with nearby landowners, and the third is through statutory credits. The requirement for BNG is in addition to following the usual mitigation hierarchy to avoid, mitigate or compensate for biodiversity losses.'</i>		
Policy 8	Delete the final part of the policy (beginning with 'Proposals that are...')	The Council is satisfied that this amendment will help to improve the clarity of the Neighbourhood Plan.	Accept examiner's recommended modification.

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Policy 9	Replace the final part of the policy with: 'The location, design, scale, and massing of development proposals (including any associated mitigation measures) should be carefully considered to avoid any unacceptable harm to the identified key views. Development proposals that would have an unacceptable impact on the identified key views will not be supported.'	The Council agrees with the examiner that this amendment will help to improve the clarity and precision of the Neighbourhood Plan.	Accept examiner's recommended modification.

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Policy 10	In the first part of the policy replace 'are required to' with 'should' In the second part of the policy replace 'permitted' with 'supported' Replace the third part of the policy with: 'New buildings and extensions should be designed in a way which will ensure light spill from internal lighting is minimised.' Delete the fourth part of the policy. In the final part of the policy replace 'Proposals including' with 'Development proposals which include' Replace the second sentence of the final part of the policy with: 'Development proposals should avoid disturbance to wildlife in the immediate locality. Proposals include lighting which would otherwise cause disturbance or risk to wildlife or the dark skies landscape should incorporate appropriate mitigation measures.' <i>At the end of paragraph 104 add the deleted fourth part of the policy.</i>	The Council agrees with the examiner that this amendment will help to improve the clarity and precision of the Neighbourhood Plan.	Accept examiner's recommended modification.

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Policy 11	Replace the final two paragraphs of the policy with: 'Wherever practicable, development proposals should incorporate multifunctional green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems and maximise multifunctional benefits, including planting.'	The Council agrees with the examiner that this amendment will help to improve the clarity and precision of the Neighbourhood Plan.	Accept examiner's recommended modification.
Policy 13	Replace the policy with: 'Development proposals for the provision of new community facilities or for the enhancement of existing community services and facilities will be supported where they comply with other relevant policies in the development plan. Proposals for the delivery of new recreational open spaces will be supported where they are: [insert paragraphs a and b from the submitted policy] <i>At the end of paragraph 122 add: 'Policy 12 identifies community facilities which will be safeguarded by existing policies in the development plan. Policy 13 offers support for new community facilities or the enhancement of existing such facilities. The Parish Council recognises that the benefits of such development may be provided by local businesses through appropriate hospitality, retail, or home working opportunities in the area. Any such proposals could be determined on their merits.'</i>	The Council agrees that these modifications are required in order to bring the necessary clarity for the policy to be effective.	Accept examiner's recommended modification.

Policy 14	Replace the policy with: ‘Insofar as planning permission is required, the use of redundant farm buildings for commercial use or community use which relate to the scale, location and character of the parish will be supported. Commercial uses which would be a main town centre use as defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework will not be supported. Proposals for the extension of redundant farm buildings for the type of uses identified in the first part of the policy will be supported where they would: • be subordinate in scale to the existing building; • respect the design and details of the parent building; • maintain and where practicable, enhance the character and appearance of their immediate surroundings; • incorporate a safe access to the local highway network and sufficient off-road vehicle parking and manoeuvring space for the size of premises.’ <i>Replace paragraph 123 with:</i> <i>‘In general terms extensions to a rural building as part of its conversion are unacceptable and proposals to convert buildings should be contained within the confines of the existing building shell. However, to support rural enterprise and encourage jobs locally, Policy 14 supports the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to commercial and community uses which relate to the scale, location, and character of the parish. The policy also clarifies that uses which would be a main town centre use as defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework will not be supported. This element of the policy has</i>	The Council is satisfied that this amendment will bring clarity to the policy.	Accept examiner’s recommended modification.
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	<i>been included to ensure that the policy does not have unintended consequences.</i> <i>The policy also supports the expansion of these buildings to accommodate the identified uses subject to a series of amenity, design and traffic and parking criteria. The policy does not address the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to residential use. Any such proposals may benefit from Class Q permitted development rights. Any proposed extension for residential uses would be considered on their merits taking account of relevant development plan policies.'</i>		

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Policy 15	Replace the policy with: <u>'General Parking Provision</u> Development proposals to improve the provision of car parking in the village will be supported where: • they are consistent with the Reedham Design Guidance and Code (2022); • they will not cause any unacceptable detriment to the amenities of the area; and • they can be safely accommodated within the local highways network. <u>Parking at the School</u> Development proposals for the improvement or expansion of parking provision for Reedham Primary and Nursery School will be supported. Development proposals for Reedham Primary and Nursery School should incorporate a parking management plan and school travel plan.' <i>Replace the policy title with: 'New Parking Provision, including for Reedham Primary and Nursery School</i>	The Council had suggested at the Reg. 16 consultation stage that this policy should be split into two, along the lines suggested, in order to improve clarity and precision. On this basis, the Council agrees with the examiner's recommendations.	Accept examiner's recommended modification.

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Policy 16	Replace the policy with: 'The Plan identifies the following buildings as non-designated heritage assets (and as shown on Figure 24 and on Appendix A of the Policies Map): [List the properties] The effect of a development proposal on the significance of an identified non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining planning applications. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'		
Community Actions	<i>Replace the final two sentences of paragraph 29 with:</i> <i>'The Plan includes a series of Community Actions. Whilst they are not land use in their nature, the Parish Council felt that they were important enough to include in the Plan. They are matters which will be led and implemented by the local community and Parish Council. The Community Actions are shown in a different colour from the land use policies. Whilst the Actions are locally-important they will not form part of the development plan.'</i>	The Council is satisfied with this amendment.	

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Monitoring & Review	<i>At the end of paragraph 148 add:</i> <i>'The adoption of the Greater Norwich Plan will bring the planning policy context up to date. In this context the Parish Council will assess the need or otherwise for a full or partial review of the neighbourhood plan within six months of the adoption of that Plan.'</i>	The Council is satisfied with this amendment.	
Other Matters – General	<i>Modification of general text (where necessary) to achieve consistency with the modified policies and to accommodate any administrative and technical changes.</i>	The Council is satisfied with this amendment and the flexibility it allows to resolve technical changes.	

4. Next Steps

This Decision Statement and the examiner's report into the Reedham Neighbourhood Plan will be made available at:

- www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plans
- **Acle Library** - Bridewell Lane, Acle, NR13 3RA
- **Broadland District Council & South Norfolk Council offices** – The Horizon Centre, Broadland Business Park, Peachman Way, Norwich, NR7 0WF (Please call to make a prior appointment – 01603 431133)

Broadland District Council is satisfied that with the modifications it has approved, as detailed above, the Reedham Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum within the neighbourhood area, in which the following question will be posed:

‘Do you want Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Reedham to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?’

Further information relating to the referendum will be published by Broadland District Council and the Broads Authority in due course.