



Broadland District Council

Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan (Revised 2024-2045) - Decision Statement

1. Summary

Following an independent examination, Broadland District Council (as the relevant local planning authority) has received the examiner's report relating to the Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan (Revised 2024-2045). The examiner concludes that, subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in the report, the revised Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to be made by Broadland District Council.

Broadland District Council has made a decision to approve each of the examiner's recommendations and to adopt the revised Neighbourhood Plan.

2. Background

Following the submission of the revised Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan to Broadland District Council in March 2025, the document was published in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and representations invited. The publication period took place between 14th May and 27th June 2025.

Broadland District Council, with the approval of Rackheath Community Council, subsequently appointed an independent examiner, Mr Andrew Matheson, 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).

The examiner's report concludes that the revised Neighbourhood Plan includes material modifications which do not change the nature of the Plan and which require examination but not a referendum. The examiner recommends that Broadland District Council should 'make' (adopt) the Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan (Revised) subject to the modifications set out in his report.

3. Decision

Having considered the recommendations in the examiner's report and the reasons for them, **Broadland District Council has decided to approve each of the examiner's proposed modifications and to adopt the revised Neighbourhood Plan.** This is in accordance with section 14 of Schedule A2 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The following table sets out the examiner's recommended modifications and the Council's commentary and decision in relation to each recommendation.

Section	Examiner's recommendation	LPA consideration of recommendation	LPA decision
<p>Contents;</p> <p>1. Introduction;</p> <p>5. Objectives and review of the Plan;</p>	<p><u>Recommendation 1</u></p> <p>1.1 On the Contents page replace “Vision: 2037” with ‘Vision: 2045’</p> <p>1.2 In the first sentence of para 1.1 “is” should become ‘was’.</p> <p>1.3 In the first sentence of para 1.2 “aims to” should be deleted and “modify and review” replaced with ‘modifies and reviews’.</p> <p>1.4 In para 1.5, first bullet point, “Scoping” should be replaced with ‘Screening’.</p> <p>1.5 Para 1.7 should be replaced as follows:</p> <p>‘After submission to Broadland District Council they in turn carried out a formal public consultation between 16th May to 27th June 2025. The representations arising were passed to the Independent Examiner who subsequently recommended that the Plan as reviewed be ‘made’.’</p> <p>1.6 In para 5.7 and the related table replace “Adopted Neighbourhood Plan” with ‘2017 Neighbourhood Plan’ and “Proposed Neighbourhood Plan” with ‘2025 Neighbourhood Plan Review’.</p>	<p>The Council agrees that these modifications are necessary to improve clarity and accuracy.</p>	<p>Approve the examiner's recommended modification.</p>

Section	Examiner's recommendation	LPA consideration of recommendation	LPA decision
<p>6.1 Policies: Housing and the built environment</p>	<p><u>Recommendation 2</u></p> <p>2.1 Within Policy HOU1:</p> <p>2.1.1 Reword criterion 1 as:</p> <p>‘Designing development layouts so that they seamlessly integrate with existing residential densities adjacent to the scheme.’</p> <p>2.1.2 Reword criterion 3 as:</p> <p>‘Providing evidence of the effectiveness of the design measures addressing overshadowing and protecting privacy between dwellings and between dwellings and their private open spaces.’</p> <p>2.1.3 Reword criterion 4 as:</p> <p>‘Ensuring that blocks of flats or apartments relate well to their surroundings by locating them away from settlement edges and visually sensitive locations and siting them adjacent to community or commercial activity, whilst not normally exceeding 3-storeys in height.’</p> <p>2.2 Para 6.1.16, Footnote 5 (p30) – delete the footnote.</p> <p>2.3 Within Policy HOU3 reword the second sentence as: ‘The mix of housing may be informed by the most recent Rackheath Housing Needs Assessment.’</p>	<p>The Council agrees with the examiner that these modifications are required in order to improve clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1 – that plans must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State.</p>	<p>Approve the examiner's recommended modification.</p>

<p>6.2 Policies: Environment and Landscape</p>	<p><u>Recommendation 3</u></p> <p>3.1 Supporting text:</p> <p>3.1.1 To Figures 13, 14, 15 & 16 add the source of the data used in the Figures; ideally a hyperlink will be provided to the relevant webpage.</p> <p>3.1.2 Delete paragraphs 6.2.10, 6.2.11, 6.2.12, 6.2.13 and 6.2.14 and renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly.</p> <p>3.2 Policy ENV1: Fresh water supply and drainage:</p> <p>3.2.1 Delete paragraphs 4 & 5.</p> <p>3.2.2 Below the sub-heading “Localised flooding” delete the line “* Identified in the 2017 Adopted Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan” and the related asterisks in the list.</p> <p>3.2.3 Move the sentence “The Community Council will not adopt any SuDs, swales or drainage operations” to the supporting text, perhaps as an addition to (as presently numbered) paragraph 6.2.15.</p> <p>3.3 Policy ENV2: Climate change:</p> <p>Delete “Management and maintenance plans must promote sustainability utilising ecofriendly systems throughout the whole lifespan of completed development proposal.”</p> <p>3.4 Policy ENV3: Biodiversity, tree belts and wildlife habitats</p> <p>Amend paragraph 2 to read:</p> <p>‘Using national policy guidance and DEFRA metrics, development proposals should provide a minimum of 10 per cent net gain in biodiversity. Optimally a 20 per cent net gain is encouraged to restore, connect and repair fragmented biodiversity networks and create new wildlife corridors and habitat areas through the creation of new, and the restoration and enhancement of existing,</p>	<p>The Council agrees that these amendments will improve the clarity and accuracy of the Plan, in particular meeting Basic Conditions 1 and 3 (plans must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State; plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area).</p>	<p>Approve the examiner’s recommended modification.</p>
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	<p>natural habitats which will include the planting of additional trees and hedgerows, the creation of ponds, and the restoration of ghost ponds.'</p> <p>3.5 Policy ENV4: Landscape buffers</p> <p>3.5.1 In the first paragraph, replace “screening” with ‘buffers’ and replace “green screens” with ‘living green screens’.</p> <p>3.5.2 After the heading “Green Infrastructure buffers” remove the duplication of “identified” in “The identified landscape buffers identified”.</p> <p>3.6 Policy ENV5: Local landscape and local heritage assets</p> <p>3.6.1 Replace “The following locally important Local Heritage Assets (figure 25) should be protected from loss or significant harm” with ‘The following locally important non-designated Heritage Assets (figure 25) have been identified’.</p> <p>3.6.2 Amend the title to non-designated Heritage Asset no.12 by deleting “Area identified by Historic England west of the Broadland Northway -“. Also make the same amendment to Figure 9 and within that figure alter the boundary to that identified by the Qualifying Body in their noted submitted on 3rd September 2025.</p> <p>3.6.3 Remove the sentence “* Identified in the 2017 Adopted Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan” and the related asterisks in the list.</p> <p>3.7 Policy ENV6: Views and vistas across the parish</p> <p>Remove the sentence “* Identified in the 2017 Adopted Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan” and the related asterisk in the list.</p> <p>3.8 Policy ENV7: Green space</p> <p>3.8.1 In the first paragraph replace the second sentence with: ‘Detailed proposals for the area identified in the Growth</p>		
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Triangle Area Action Plan as GT16 North Rackheath should include a large green space which provides a focal point for the Parish’.

3.8.2 Local Green Spaces:

3.8.2.1 Delete from the list (renumbering spaces as appropriate) proposed areas d, f & i (and amend paragraph 6.2.34 accordingly).

3.8.2.2 Remove the sentence “* Identified in the 2017 Adopted Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan” and the related asterisks in the list.

3.8.3 Amenity Spaces:

3.8.3.1 Add a new sub-heading: ‘Amenity Spaces’.

3.8.3.2 Under this new sub-heading add the following Policy wording:

‘The following are identified as important amenity spaces which contribute significantly to the character and attractive appearance of the residential area at their location:

- a. The Landings
- b. Liberty Park.’

3.8.4 Amend Figure 27, deleting area i and adding a key to be in line with the amended Policy.

3.8.5 Amend Figure 9, bringing the Local Green Spaces and new Amenity Spaces identified in line with the amended Policy.

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	<p>3.9 Policy ENV9: Dark skies</p> <p>3.9.1 Replace Figure 28 with the amended copy supplied by Qualifying Body incorporating the outline of the Parish boundary.</p> <p>3.9.2 Replace the first sentence with: 'Development proposals must take account of Rackheath's rural dark skies'; delete footnote 13.</p> <p>3.9.3 In the second paragraph replace "compliance with" with 'appropriate attention to'.</p> <p>3.9.4 Delete the final paragraph.</p>		

<p>6.3 Policies: Community</p>	<p><u>Recommendation 4</u></p> <p>4.1 Policy COM2: New play areas and community spaces:</p> <p>4.1.1 From the second paragraph, remove “Larger play and park provision should have appropriate levels of parking, and where possible, be located near community buildings”.</p> <p>4.1.2 Delete the third paragraph and replace it with:</p> <p>‘Appropriate levels of parking should be provided at large recreation spaces and community facilities, including those delivered as part of GT16, when they will have a wider catchment area of users than the community within walking and cycling reach.’</p> <p>4.1.3 In the fourth paragraph replace “play options” with ‘recreation options’.</p> <p>4.2 Policy COM4: New and existing community facilities</p> <p>4.2.1 From the second paragraph delete “and should be protected from changes which dilute its size or change its function as a community asset.”</p> <p>4.2.2 From the third paragraph remove “The uses and management of such a building should be determined in consultation with the Community Council” and perhaps add it as a Project in Section 8 or to a reference to the new community hub in the supporting text, along the lines of:</p> <p>‘The prospect of a new community hub building as Rackheath expands could bring many new facilities. The uses’.</p> <p>4.2.3 Under the sub-heading “Existing facilities” put a full stop after “encouraged”, add a new sub-heading ‘Protecting community facilities’ and move the balance of the paragraph to sit under this so as to read:</p>	<p>The Council agrees that these amendments will improve the clarity and accuracy of the Plan, in particular meeting Basic Conditions 1 and 3 (plans must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State; plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area).</p>	<p>Approve the examiner’s recommended modification.</p>
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	<p>'Proposals which would result in the loss of all or part of a community facility will not be supported unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. It can be demonstrated that the facilities are no longer needed or viable; b. It can be demonstrated that suitable alternative provision exists; or c. Suitable alternative provision will be delivered by new development.' <p>4.3 Policy COM5: New sports facilities</p> <p>Replace the first two sentences with:</p> <p>'The provision of new, inclusive indoor and outdoor sports facilities is encouraged, which should be suitable for a wide range of ages.'</p> <p>4.4 Policy COM6: Allotments</p> <p>Replace the third sentence with: 'The allotments in Site GT16 should be delivered at the earliest possible opportunity'. Delete the fourth sentence.</p> 		

<p>6.4 Policies: Business and Employment</p>	<p><u>Recommendation 5</u></p> <p>5.1 Paragraph 6.4.5: Delete the last sentence.</p> <p>5.2 Policy BUS1: New and expanding businesses.</p> <p>5.2.1 Replace the title with ‘New and existing businesses’.</p> <p>5.2.2 Replace the third paragraph with:</p> <p>‘The design of new and expanded business premises should have appropriate regard to the Rackheath Design Guidance and Codes (Appendix 2). Care is required with building heights to ensure the assimilation of new buildings into the wider rural landscape.’</p> <p>5.2.3 In the fourth paragraph replace “Traffic” with ‘Heavy goods’ and delete the final sentence.</p> <p>5.2.4 In the fifth paragraph replace “commercial” with ‘business’.</p> <p>5.3 Policy BUS2: Buffer between residential and industrial:</p> <p>5.3.1 Replace “suitable screening to protect” with ‘protecting’.</p> <p>5.3.2 In the related footnote 17, replace “non-polluting industrial processes” with ‘industrial processes which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity’.</p> <p>5.4 Paragraph 6.4.11:</p> <p>Move the last two sentences of this paragraph to paragraph 6.4.10; also correct “in reasonable” to ‘unreasonable’.</p> <p>5.5 Policy BUS3: Local Centre</p> <p>Replace the first sentence with ‘Within GT16 North Rackheath, a new, mixed-use (homes, shops and businesses) Local Centre is</p>	<p>The Council agrees that these amendments will improve the clarity and accuracy of the Plan, in particular meeting Basic Conditions 1 and 3 (plans must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State; plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area).</p>	<p>Approve the examiner’s recommended modification.</p>
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	supported, located with easy access from all main pedestrian routes.'		
6.5 Policies: Services	<p>6.1 Policy SER1: School and pre-school provision:</p> <p>6.1.1 Reword the first sentence as: 'The provision of a secondary school as well as additional primary schools and pre-school nurseries is supported in principle.'</p> <p>6.1.2 Replace the first sentence of second paragraph with: 'School facilities should be designed so as to not dominate their surroundings and should be set within a sufficiently open space to allow their assimilation into the wider landscape'.</p> <p>6.2 Policy SER2: Primary Health Care:</p> <p>Replace the first two sentences with:</p> <p>'Enhancements to medical and dental services, both at the Medical Centre and at a new facility should one come forward in development proposals, are supported in principle. Any new facility should:'.</p> <p>6.3 Policy SER3: Utilities</p> <p>Reword this Policy as: 'Utilities' structures should be grouped in locations and landscaped so as to be discrete, to minimise their visual impact on the built environment and to maintain a rural feel.'</p>	<p>The Council agrees that these amendments will improve the clarity and accuracy of the Plan, in particular meeting Basic Conditions 1 and 3 (plans must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State; plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area).</p>	<p>Approve the examiner's recommended modification.</p>

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<p>6.6 Policies: Transport and Access</p>	<p><u>Recommendation 7</u></p> <p>7.1 Policy TRA1: Public transport</p> <p>Revert the wording of this Policy to that in the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>7.2 Policy TRA2: Pedestrian, cycle and bridleways</p> <p>Replace “All major development proposals should be located where there is access to public transport services” with ‘For all major development proposals, public transport arrangements linking to the main community facilities should be included in the transport plan’.</p> <p>7.3 Policy TRA3: Layout and traffic calming</p> <p>7.3.1 Delete the first and second paragraphs.</p> <p>7.3.2 In the fourth paragraph replace “There should be more than one route in and out of major or large estate scale developments including for emergency vehicles and for all commercial developments of more than 1 hectare” with ‘Where 80 or more dwellings are being provided (or an equivalent scale of commercial development) an additional access to assist emergency service vehicles may be required by the Highway Authority’.</p> <p>7.4 Policy TRA4: Residential car parking for new developments</p> <p>7.4.1 In the first paragraph add element b.iii (and delete element c) as follows: ‘any obstruction of footpaths, cycleways or pavements’</p> <p>7.4.2 Delete the fourth paragraph.</p>	<p>The Council agrees that these amendments will improve the clarity and accuracy of the Plan, in particular meeting Basic Conditions 1 and 3 (plans must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State; plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area).</p>	<p>Approve the examiner's recommended modification.</p>

<p>Appendices;</p> <p>Rackheath Housing Needs Assessment;</p> <p>Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan Review – Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report (Updated October 2024);</p>	<p><u>Recommendation 8</u></p> <p>8.1 Appendix 2: Rackheath Design Guidance and Codes 2025.</p> <p>8.1.1 Recheck and correct as required the source details for the illustrations, in particular those said to derive from the “National Design Guidance”; add page number details wherever possible.</p> <p>8.1.2 Delete Figure 32, page 30 and references to it in the text.</p> <p>8.1.3 Design Guidance & Codes – Lighting (p33): replace “Lighting should be attached to buildings where possible” with ‘Lighting is encouraged to be attached to buildings where appropriate and feasible’.</p> <p>8.1.4 D1. Rackheath’s street hierarchy (p34): replace “all public roads must be designed and built to an adoptable highways authority standard” with ‘roads should be designed and built to the Highway Authority’s adoptable standard’.</p> <p>8.1.5 D2. Pedestrian and cycling connectivity through Rackheath (p35): add to “for example at waist height or painted on the road” as follows: ‘except where reasons of safety dictate otherwise’.</p> <p>8.1.6 E4. Surface water drainage (p46): to the “Code” section add an additional bullet point: ‘SuDS must be designed to avoid impacts on archaeology’.</p> <p>8.1.7 F3. Provision of allotments, orchards and composting (p52): within the phrase “No existing orchards must be lost from Rackheath” replace “must” with ‘should’ and add to the phrase ‘unless a replacement orchard of the same size or larger is provided as part of a scheme’.</p> <p>8.2 Appendix 3: Description of Local Heritage Assets</p>	<p>The Council agrees with the examiner that these modifications are required in order to improve clarity and accuracy and to meet Basic Condition 1 – that plans must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State.</p>	<p>Approve the examiner’s recommended modification.</p>
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	<p>8.2.1 Ensure that this Appendix includes full details and fair illustrations of each of the properties now listed as non-designated heritage assets.</p> <p>8.2.2 For the asset listed as no. 12, remove misleading references as to the comments from Historic England (including in the list title and title for the photographs) and add details (in the text) of the assessment (and its source) made by Broadland DC staff. Include the map of the original park with source references.</p> <p>8.3 Appendix 4: Justification for Local Green Spaces</p> <p>8.3.1 Ensure that this Appendix includes full details and appropriately scaled maps of each of the areas to be listed as Local Green Spaces. Omit areas d), f) and h).</p> <p>8.3.2 Ensure that the tabulation headings match with the NPPF criteria in full ie include the requirement that a space is not only “demonstrably special” but it also “holds a particular local significance” (NPPF para 107); the content of the tabulation in turn must address the whole of that heading.</p> <p>8.3.3. Create an additional sub-heading ‘Amenity Spaces’ with a simple tabulation that includes a description of spaces d) and f) with an appropriately scaled map.</p> <p>8.4 Appendix 5: Glossary</p> <p>Edit this Appendix to specifically relate to the content of the Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan content.</p> <p>8.5 Rackheath Housing Needs Assessment</p> <p>At paragraph 4.57, after “First Homes would need to be offered at 40-50% discount to be affordable on average Rackheath incomes” add ‘but would be subject to a viability assessment’.</p>		
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	<p>8.6 Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan Review Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report Updated October 2024</p> <p>Correct the headers for this document.</p>		

4. Next Steps

This Decision Statement, the examiner's report, the adopted version of the Rackheath Neighbourhood Plan (Revised 2024-2045), and the final decision notice will be made available at:

- www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plans;
- **Rackheath Pavilion** - Green Lane West, Rackheath, NR13 6LT (open Tues-Fri, 10am-1pm & 2pm-4pm; contact 01603 920990 to arrange viewing);
- **Sprowston Library** – Recreation Ground Road, Norwich, NR7 8EW (open Tues & Weds 10am-7pm; Thurs 2-7pm; Fri 10am-7pm; Sat 9.30am-4pm);
- **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).