

Acle Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

Response of the Qualifying Body to the Examiner's Clarification Note – August 2026

Examiner's Questions:

Policy ACLE6

I note that this policy continues the approach taken in the made Plan. Are there any emerging proposals for the area affected by the policy?

Response:

There are no current applications or formal proposals within the area affected by the policy. There have been historic applications connected with Acle Bridge Inn such as play equipment, campsite, lighting etc and also flood defence works as part of a Broad wide scheme. There have been informal aspirations for some time locally for an improved leisure and boating offer in the area.

Policy ACLE7

Does the second paragraph (on relationship between Acle Academy and the allocated housing site in the Greater Norwich Local Plan) have any bearing on the way in which the housing site was allocated in the Local Plan?

Response:

The paragraph is entirely consistent with the Local Plan policy (B.AC.1) which recognises that this site is the **only** site which would enable any future expansion of the Academy and therefore this opportunity should not be lost through an inappropriately designed development which would prevent further expansion from happening.

Policy ACLE10

In general terms the policy takes an appropriate approach to flood risk and has regard to Section 14 of the NPPF. However, it takes a broadbrush approach which could have a significant impact on minor and domestic proposals which will continue to be the principal type of planning applications in the Plan period. As such, I am minded to recommend modifications to ensure that the policy takes a proportionate approach to flood risk. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Response:

It is accepted that the policy would need to be proportionally and practically applied and therefore there would be no objection in principle to amended wording to achieve this. Amended wording would be welcomed.

Policy ACLE12

The part of the policy on Local Green Spaces is helpfully underpinned by the details in Appendix C. Within this context:

- *what is the size of the proposed LGS 21?*
- *please can the Parish Council elaborate on the way in which it considers that proposed LGS22 is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves.*

Is there any direct evidence to support the final element of the New Green Spaces part of the policy? In addition, is there any relationship between this part of the policy and the content of paragraph 10.21 of the Plan?

Response:

LGS21 – Damgate Wood – Northern section is approximately 5.6 hectares in size and southern section is approximately 6.1 hectares.

LGS22 – It is accepted that this currently lies some distance from the main built-up area of the village, however there are cottages within 150m. The development of allocated sites in the GNLP: for example B.AC.1 west of Acle and north of Norwich Road and B.AC.2 Land north of Norwich Road will both bring built development closer to proposed LGS22. Intervening land is also put forward through the most recent Call for Sites and therefore there is the potential for even more development in close proximity to LGS22. The site is a popular walk for residents, and it is also part of a Norfolk Trail, Burlingham Woodland Walks, and part of the GNLP planned green corridor to Norwich.

The figure of 25 mentioned in the last part of the policy is taken from the definition of 'major development'. It is considered that at this point (the construction of 25 dwellings) that the need arises for amenity/play needs for residents, and it would also enhance the visual design of the development. There is no specific relationship between the paragraph 10.21 and this part of the policy.

Policy ACLE13

The policy takes a positive approach to biodiversity and has regard to Section 16 of the NPPF. However, the broadbrush approach taken in its first part could have a significant impact on minor and domestic proposals which will continue to be the principal type of planning applications in the Plan period. As such, I am minded to recommend modifications to ensure that this part of the policy takes a proportionate approach to biodiversity and the ecological network. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Response:

No objections to Examiner modifications relating to proportionality of approach. Amended wording would be welcomed.

Policy ACLE14

I looked carefully at a selection of the proposed views during the visit. I note that the identification of the views is underpinned by the details in the supporting text.

There is a degree of tension between the first two parts of the policy. Given the contents of the second part, is the second sentence of the first part necessary?

In addition, there is a potential tension between the identification of proposed views A-C and the allocation of land in this part of the neighbourhood area for housing purposes in the Greater Norwich Local Plan. I note the commentary in paragraph 7.3 of the Basic Conditions Statement and in the details about the three views in the Plan. Nevertheless, please can the Parish Council comment further about how it has addressed this matter and the potential impact of the identification of the views on the number of homes that would be delivered on the allocated site.

Response:

It is accepted that the ambition of the second part of paragraph 1 is covered by paragraph 2 and therefore there is duplication.

The proposed policy wording recognises that development will take place. It does allow for development within a view but requires that development to take account of the overall view and the policy aim is to challenge the scheme designers to produce a layout that will retain part of or give hints at the views through careful consideration of where green space is located, how buildings are orientated and road layouts. The policy is clear that the onus is on the developer to demonstrate how they have sought to accommodate the view within the development layout.

Representations

1. Repton Property Developments

ACLE1: See response to Examiner's Questions above. This is consistent with the Local Plan. It should be noted that since the Local Plan was adopted that the method for calculating housing numbers has been changed and therefore it is likely that a higher number of dwellings will be required in the Local Plan Review. This site is the **only** site which would allow for school expansion to accommodate those higher numbers and therefore it is important that this opportunity is not lost. Therefore the policy wording should remain.

ACLE14: Agree that the Local Plan allocation could be included on the proposals map as this would aid clarity. See response to Examiner's Questions above. The policy places the onus on the developer to demonstrate how they have sought to accommodate the view within the development layout.

Design Code

RV.01.04 (Building Form). Accept that this may not always be practically achievable.

RV.01.02 (Settlement Edge). It is recommended that a definition be provided of 'disproportionately high dense, urbanised layouts – Development layouts where the concentration, scale and arrangement of buildings are significantly greater or more intensive than the prevailing character of Acle and its immediate surroundings. Such layouts may include closely packed buildings, limited private gardens and landscaping, excessive hard surfacing, uniform or repetitive building forms, inadequate space between properties, and streets dominated by parking. The term does not refer to density alone, but to layouts that, taken as a whole, create an overly urban character that is poorly related to Acle's village setting, local townscape and transition to the surrounding countryside.

RV.01.03 (Building Placement). The preference is for this to be retained as code. The reason for this is that new housing layouts should allow for adequate room for access to rear gardens for example for bin storage, wheelbarrows, disabled people and children's buggies. At the same time this would help to mitigate the potential risk of fire spreading between properties which has been a significant concern in summer 2025 and more recently summer 2026.

GC.01.03 (Biodiversity). Agree to move requirement for low maintenance gardens from Code to guidance as this cannot be enforced.

ACLE2: No objection to additional wording if the Examiner is minded to include.

ACLE3: No objection to additional wording if the Examiner is minded to include.

ACLE9: No objection to additional wording if the Examiner is minded to include.

ACLE11: No objection to the additional wording if the Examiner is minded to include.

ACLE12: See response to Examiner's Questions above.

ACLE13: Do not agree with representation. The GNLP policy predates the introduction of BNG at 10% and therefore this Policy is more up to date.

ACLE15: Given recent incidents across the country this policy ambition is more important than ever and therefore the 'must' needs to be retained.

2. Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service

Similar comments were made at Pre-Submission stage which were not included as there was a concern that the Neighbourhood Plan was not the appropriate vehicle for determining the apportionment of District Level CIL payments which are a strategic matter. It is clear from early community consultation that healthcare is the main priority for Acle residents in any event..

Comments in relation to ACLE1, ACLE3, ACLE9 and ACLE15: fire appliance access; ACLE1, ACLE10 and ACLE15: firefighting water supplies and hydrants: Both issues appear to be covered by Building Regulations and therefore does not need to be in a Neighbourhood Plan policy. However if the Examiner is so minded to include these there would be no objection in principle.

3. Anglian Water.

No objection to the suggested amendments if the Examiner is so minded to include them.

4. Broadland District Council

General Comments – no objection to suggested amendments

ACLE1: Agreed that the suggested wording relating to variation in roof pitch would be appropriate.

ACLE2: No objection to inclusion of reference for smaller market housing

ACLE5: No objection to the suggested amendments if the Examiner is so minded to include them.

ACLE7: No objection to the suggested amendments in respect of health care provision

ACLE8: The Parish Council is of the view is that the need has been established. However, to aid clarity the policy wording could be amended to remove the first part of the sentence and begin "Proposals for a new cemetery in Acle"

ACLE9: The routes referred to in the policy are still aspirational and have not been formally defined. It is therefore it not possible to map them without more certainty and the Parish Council would not wish to raise expectations unnecessarily as to where a proposed route might go until there is more certainty. It is considered that must is appropriate given the statutory protection afforded to rights of way.

ACLE10: This wording has been used in other Neighbourhood Plans and is commonly asked for by Local Lead Flood Agency

ACLE12: See response to Examiner's questions above.

Paragraph 10.23 – no objection to suggested factual change

Paragraph 10.28 – no objection to suggested change which is inline with legislation.

Paragraph 10.29 – the ambition for BNG to be delivered offsite elsewhere in the parish is a preference if it cannot be delivered on site. The 20% refers to on site delivery.

ACLE13: No objection to the inclusion of the footnote or the inclusion of the hedgerow in Appendix D. No objection to inclusion of other bird boxes and bat boxes. The wording relating to veteran features came from Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

ACLE14: See response to Examiner's Questions above.

ACLE15: No objection if the Examiner were minded to re-word this policy for clarity.

Appendix D: See response to ACLE 13 above

Glossary: No objection to suggested additions.

5. Broads Authority

General: No objection to any proposed factual or grammatical changes.

ACLE1: No objection to suggested amendments if the Examiner is minded to include them

ACLE2: Agree to removal of 'and prevention'

ACLE5: This is dealt with under the Broadland response

ACLE9: Agree to inclusion of 'barrier free'

ACLE13: Agree to the inclusion of the suggested HRA caveats

NDHA – this has been recast following representations made at Pre-Submission Stage

Design Code : This was produced by AECOM who are no longer in contract with Locality , however it is possible that they can be persuaded to make some minor changes.