

Tasburgh Neighbourhood Development Plan 2023-2038

**A report to South Norfolk Council on the
Tasburgh Neighbourhood Development Plan**

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Tasburgh Neighbourhood Development Plan

Revision to Examiner's Report

Context

This Note sets out a detailed revision to my report on the submitted Plan.

Revision

In Policy TAS9 delete the final paragraph (which refers to the Design Guidance and Codes).

This revision will ensure that Policy TAS9 is consistent with the recommended modifications for the other parts of the Plan.

Other comments

Otherwise, my report of 5 February 2024 is unaffected.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

Tasburgh Neighbourhood Development Plan

1 March 2024

Executive Summary

- 1 I was appointed by South Norfolk Council in November 2023 to carry out the independent examination of the Tasburgh Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2 The examination was undertaken by way of written representations. I visited the neighbourhood area on 19 December 2023.
- 3 The Plan includes a variety of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. There is a very clear focus on two matters. The first is the proposed designation of a series of Local Green Spaces. The second is ensuring high standards of design. The Plan has been prepared in short order.
- 4 The Plan has been underpinned by community support and engagement. All sections of the community have been engaged in its preparation.
- 5 Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this report, I have concluded that the Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.
- 6 I recommend that the referendum should be held within the neighbourhood area.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
5 February 2024

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings of the independent examination of the Tasburgh Neighbourhood Development Plan 2023-2038 ('the Plan').
- 1.2 The Plan was submitted to South Norfolk Council (SNC) by Tasburgh Parish Council (TPC) in its capacity as the qualifying body responsible for preparing the neighbourhood plan.
- 1.3 Neighbourhood plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They aim to allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012, 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2023. The NPPF continues to be the principal element of national planning policy.
- 1.4 The role of an independent examiner is clearly defined in the legislation. I have been appointed to examine whether the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions and Convention Rights and other statutory requirements. It is not within my remit to examine or to propose an alternative plan, or a potentially more sustainable plan except where this arises as from my recommended modifications to ensure that the plan meets the basic conditions and the other relevant requirements.
- 1.5 A neighbourhood plan can be narrow or broad in scope and can include whatever range of policies it sees as appropriate to its designated neighbourhood area. The submitted Plan has been designed to be distinctive in general terms, and to be complementary to the existing development plan. It seeks to provide a context in which the neighbourhood area can maintain its character and appearance and that new development is designed in a positive way.
- 1.6 Within the context set out above, this report assesses whether the Plan is legally compliant and meets the basic conditions that apply to neighbourhood plans. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends changes to its policies and supporting text.
- 1.7 This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome the Plan would then become part of the wider development plan and be used to determine planning applications in the neighbourhood area.

2 The Role of the Independent Examiner

- 2.1 The examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted neighbourhood plan meets the relevant legislative and procedural requirements.
- 2.2 I was appointed by SNC, with the consent of TPC, to conduct the examination of the Plan and to prepare this report. I am independent of SNC and TPC. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.
- 2.3 I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I am a Director of Andrew Ashcroft Planning Limited. In previous roles, I have over 40 years' experience in various local authorities at either Head of Planning or Service Director level and more recently as an independent examiner. I am a chartered town planner and have significant experience of undertaking other neighbourhood plan examinations and health checks. I am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral System.

Examination Outcomes

- 2.4 In my role as the independent examiner of the Plan I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the examination:
- (a) that the Plan as submitted should proceed to a referendum; or
 - (b) that the Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
 - (c) that the Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 2.5 The outcome of the examination is set out in Section 8 of this report.

Other examination matters

- 2.6 In examining the Plan, I am required to check whether:
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area; and
 - the Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one neighbourhood area); and
 - the Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.
- 2.7 I have addressed the matters identified in paragraph 2.6 of this report and am satisfied that they have been met.

3 Procedural Matters

3.1 In undertaking this examination I have considered the following documents:

- the submitted Plan.
- the Basic Conditions Statement.
- the Consultation Statement.
- the TPC SEA screening report.
- the SNC HRA screening report
- the representations made to the Plan.
- TPC's responses to the clarification note.
- the adopted Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for the Greater Norwich Area (Broadland, Norwich, and South Norfolk).
- the Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document (SSAPD).
- the Development Management Policies Document (DMPD).
- the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP).
- the emerging Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (VCHAP).
- the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023).
- Planning Practice Guidance.
- relevant Ministerial Statements.

3.2 I visited the neighbourhood area on 19 December 2023. I looked at its overall character and appearance and at those areas affected by policies in the Plan in particular.

3.3 It is a general rule that neighbourhood plan examinations should be held by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations made to the submitted plan, I concluded that the Plan could be examined by way of written representations.

3.4 The Basic Conditions Statement comments about the relationship of the Plan with the 2021 version of the NPPF. The NPPF was updated in both September and December 2023 after the Plan had been submitted. Plainly these updates were beyond the control of TPC. For clarity, I have assessed the Plan against the December 2023 version of the NPPF.

4 Consultation

Consultation Process

- 4.1 Policies in made neighbourhood plans become the basis for local planning and development control decisions. As such the regulations require neighbourhood plans to be supported and underpinned by public consultation.
- 4.2 In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2012, TPC prepared a Consultation Statement. It is proportionate to the neighbourhood area and its policies. It is commendably brief with more details included in six appendices. In the round it is a very good example of a Statement of this type.
- 4.3 The Statement records the various activities that were held to engage the local community and the feedback from each event. They are based around three key stages (which are supported by separate appendices). Key elements of the communications strategy were:
- the use of the Neighbourhood Plan pages on the TPC website for regular updates and information about future events;
 - posters displayed around the parish;
 - articles in the Tasburgh Quarterly & Church News (parish magazine); and
 - the use of Facebook.
- 4.4 The Statement also provides specific details on the consultation processes that took place on the pre-submission version of the Plan (March to May 2021). Appendix 6(d) lists the comments received and advises about the way the Plan was refined because of this process. It helps to explain the evolution of the Plan.
- 4.5 I am satisfied that consultation has been an important element of the Plan's production. Advice on the neighbourhood planning process has been made available to the community in a positive and direct way by those responsible for the Plan's preparation. From all the evidence provided to me as part of the examination, I can see that the Plan has promoted an inclusive approach to seeking the opinions of all concerned throughout the process. SNC has carried out its own assessment that the consultation process has complied with the requirements of the Regulations.

Consultation Responses

- 4.6 Consultation on the submitted plan was undertaken by SNC. This exercise generated representations from the following organisations:
- National Highways
 - Sport England
 - Norfolk Historic Environmental Record
 - Historic England
 - Natural England

- Norfolk Constabulary
- Norfolk Wildlife Trust
- Environment Agency
- Anglian Water
- Norfolk County Council
- South Norfolk Council

4.7 Comments were also received from several residents. I have taken account of all the representations in preparing this report. Where it is appropriate to do so, I refer to specific representations on a policy-by-policy basis.

5 The Neighbourhood Area and the Development Plan Context

The Neighbourhood Area

- 5.1 The neighbourhood area is the parish of Tasburgh. Its population in 2011 was 1149 persons living in 463 households. It is situated approximately ten miles south of Norwich. It was designated as a neighbourhood area in May 2020.
- 5.2 There are two main areas of settlement in the parish - Upper and Lower Tasburgh. Upper Tasburgh has developed as a nucleated settlement because of post-war estate development and lies above the Tas Valley which runs to the south and west. St Mary's Church lies at the western end of Upper Tasburgh on slightly higher ground. Lower Tasburgh is set in the Tas Valley and comprises ribbon development strung along part of Grove Lane and Low Road. Other than a small estate at Harvey Close, the character of Lower Tasburgh comprises single plot depth development of varying age with significant trees and hedges interspersed with important gaps that give it an attractive rural character.
- 5.3 The character and appearance of the neighbourhood area is heavily affected by the River Tas. Two of its tributaries converge at Tasburgh. In addition, there are several commercial uses along the A140 (Norwich to Ipswich Road).

Development Plan Context

- 5.4 The development plan for the neighbourhood area is both comprehensive and emerging. The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for the Greater Norwich Area (Broadland, Norwich, and South Norfolk) was adopted in 2014. Tasburgh is one of a series of defined Service Villages in the Plan. The following policies in the JCS are particularly relevant to the submitted Plan:
- Policy 1: Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets;
 - Policy 2: Promoting good design;
 - Policy 15: Service Villages; and
 - Policy 17: Smaller rural communities and the countryside.
- 5.5 The Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document (SSAPD) is part of the South Norfolk Local Plan. It supplements the JCS and designates areas of land to deliver housing, employment, recreation, open spaces, and community uses. Policy TAS1 allocates 1.14 hectares of land to the north of Church Road for residential development (approximately 20 homes).
- 5.6 In addition, SNC adopted a Development Management Policies Document (DMPD) in 2015. Important policies in that Document as they refer to the parish include:
- Policy DM2.2 Working from Home;
 - Policy DM3.2 Meeting rural housing needs;
 - Policy DM3.4 Residential extensions and conversions within settlements;
 - Policy DM3.13 Amenity, noise, and quality of life; and
 - Policy DM3.16 Improving the level of local community facilities.

- 5.7 In this broader context of the development plan the Plan's policies have been assessed for their conformity against the development plan in the following sections of the Basic Conditions Statement:
- the Greater Norwich Joint Core Strategy 2014 (Column C),
 - the South Norfolk Development Management Policies 2015 (Column D),
 - the South Norfolk Site-Specific Allocations and Policies Document (Column E).

This is best practice. It reflects the comprehensive nature of the development plan

- 5.8 The JCS will eventually be replaced by the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). The GNLP is now well advanced. Consultation on Main Modifications to the Plan ended in December 2023. In this context the Statement includes a separate table which assesses the policies in the submitted Plan for their conformity against the emerging GNLP.
- 5.9 The emerging Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (VCHAP) will supplement the GNLP. It is also well-advanced. Consultation on the pre-submission draft plan ended in March 2023. Consultation is currently taking place on alternative sites and focused changes to the Plan. The VCHAP proposes the allocation of land at Church Road Tasburgh for housing development (Policy VCTAS1).
- 5.10 On the one hand, the development plan context for the neighbourhood area is complex. On the other hand, TPC has carefully produced a Plan which seeks to complement the existing and emerging development plans. In addition, the submitted Plan has relied on up-to-date information and research that has underpinned existing planning policy documents. This is good practice and reflects key elements in Planning Practice Guidance on this matter.

Visit to the neighbourhood area

- 5.11 I visited the neighbourhood area on 19 December 2023. I approached from Norwich to the north on the A140. This helped me to understand its position in general and its accessibility to the strategic road network.
- 5.12 I saw the importance of the various businesses along the A140 and as referenced in several of the policies in the Plan.
- 5.13 I looked initially at the proposed housing allocation at land to the north of Church Road (and as addressed in Policy TAS9 of the Plan). I saw the importance of the School and the way in which it secured access off Henry Preston Road. I also looked at the proposed housing site from Grove Lane to the west.
- 5.14 I then looked at St Mary's Church and the Hillfort. I saw their strategic positions on higher ground in the parish.
- 5.15 I then looked at the Village Hall and the various associated recreational facilities. It was clear that it was at the heart of the parish (in both geographical and community terms).

- 5.16 I continued along Grove Lane to Lower Tasburgh. In doing so, I saw the importance of River Tas within the parish. I saw that its character was very different to that of Upper Tasburgh and was based on single plot developments along both Low Road and Saxlingham Lane.
- 5.17 I spent time looking at Burrfield Park. It is an excellent example of a local green space and complemented the tranquillity of this part of the parish.

6 The Neighbourhood Plan and the Basic Conditions

- 6.1 This section of the report deals with the submitted neighbourhood plan as a whole and the extent to which it meets the basic conditions. The submitted Basic Conditions Statement has helped in the preparation of this section of the report. It is an informative and well-presented document.
- 6.2 As part of this process, I must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the basic conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. To comply with the basic conditions, the Plan must:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in the area;
 - be compatible with European Union (EU) obligations and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); and
 - not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

I assess the Plan against the basic conditions under the following headings.

National Planning Policies and Guidance

- 6.3 For the purposes of this examination the key elements of national policy relating to planning matters are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF).
- 6.4 The NPPF sets out a range of land-use planning principles to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The following are particularly relevant to the Tasburgh Neighbourhood Development Plan:
- a plan-led system - in this case the relationship between the neighbourhood plan and the JCS, the SSAPD and the DMPD.
 - building a strong, competitive economy;
 - recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving local communities;
 - taking account of the different roles and characters of different areas;
 - highlighting the importance of high-quality design and good standards of amenity for all future occupants of land and buildings; and
 - conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 6.5 Neighbourhood plans sit within this wider context both generally, and within the more specific presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 13 of the NPPF indicates that neighbourhoods should both develop plans that support the strategic needs set out in local plans and plan positively to support local development that is outside the strategic elements of the development plan.

- 6.6 In addition to the NPPF I have also taken account of other elements of national planning policy including Planning Practice Guidance and the recent ministerial statements.
- 6.7 Having considered all the evidence and representations available as part of the examination I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to national planning policies and guidance subject to the recommended modifications in this report. It sets out a positive vision for the future of the neighbourhood area. It includes a series of policies on a range of development and environmental matters. It has a focus on designating local green spaces and ensuring that new development is designed in a positive way.
- 6.8 At a more practical level, the NPPF indicates that plans should provide a clear framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made and that they should give a clear indication of how a decision-maker should react to a development proposal (paragraph 16d). This was reinforced with the publication of Planning Practice Guidance. Paragraph ID: 41-041-20140306 indicates that policies in neighbourhood plans should be drafted with sufficient clarity so that a decision-maker can apply them consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. Policies should also be concise, precise, and supported by appropriate evidence.
- 6.9 As submitted the Plan does not fully accord with this range of practical issues. Most of my recommended modifications in Section 7 relate to matters of clarity and precision. They are designed to ensure that the Plan fully accords with national policy.

Contributing to sustainable development

- 6.10 There are clear overlaps between national policy and the contribution that the submitted Plan makes to achieving sustainable development. Sustainable development has three principal dimensions – economic, social, and environmental. The submitted Plan has set out to achieve sustainable development in the neighbourhood area. In the economic dimension, the Plan includes a policy for business development (Policy TAS10). In the social role, it includes policies on housing mix (Policy TAS8), and on the village hall site (Policy TAS14). In the environmental dimension, the Plan positively seeks to protect its natural, built, and historic environment. It has policies on design (Policy TAS6) and on heritage assets (Policy TAS11). This assessment overlaps with the details on this matter in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement.

General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan

- 6.11 I have already commented in detail on the development plan context in South Norfolk in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.10 of this report.
- 6.12 I consider that the submitted Plan delivers a local dimension to this strategic context and supplements the detail already included in the adopted development plan. Subject to the recommended modifications in this report, I am satisfied that the submitted Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 6.13 The Neighbourhood Plan (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 require a qualifying body either to submit an environmental report prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 or a statement of reasons why an environmental report is not required.
- 6.14 In order to comply with this requirement, TPC undertook a screening exercise in March 2023 on the need or otherwise for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be prepared for the Plan. The report is thorough and well-constructed. It concludes that the Plan is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment and therefore does not require a Strategic Environment Assessment.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 6.15 SNC prepared a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Plan in February 2023. There are no protected sites in the parish the report. Nevertheless, the HRA assesses the potential impact of the Plan's policies on the Norfolk Valley Fen SAC. The report is thorough and comprehensive.
- 6.16 The HRA concludes that the neighbourhood plan will not give rise to likely significant effects on these protected sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and that Appropriate Assessment is not required.
- 6.17 Having reviewed the information provided to me as part of the examination, I am satisfied that a proportionate process has been undertaken in accordance with the various regulations. None of the statutory consultees have raised any concerns about these matters. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, I am entirely satisfied that the submitted Plan is compatible with this aspect of neighbourhood plan regulations.

Human Rights

- 6.18 In a similar fashion I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and that it complies with the Human Rights Act. There is no evidence that has been submitted to me to suggest otherwise. There has been full and adequate opportunity for all interested parties to take part in the preparation of the Plan and to make their comments known. On this basis, I conclude that the submitted Plan does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with the ECHR.

Summary

- 6.19 On the basis of my assessment of the Plan in this section of my report I am satisfied that it meets the basic conditions subject to the incorporation of the recommended modifications contained in this report.

7 The Neighbourhood Plan policies

- 7.1 This section of the report comments on the policies in the Plan. It makes a series of recommended modifications to ensure that the various policies have the necessary precision to meet the basic conditions.
- 7.2 The recommendations focus on the policies in the Plan given that the basic conditions relate primarily to this aspect of neighbourhood plans. In some cases, I have also recommended changes to the associated supporting text.
- 7.3 I am satisfied that the content and the form of the Plan is fit for purpose. It is distinctive and proportionate to the Plan area. The wider community and TPC have spent time and energy in identifying the issues and objectives that they wish to be included in their Plan. This sits at the heart of the localism agenda.
- 7.4 The Plan has been designed to respond to Planning Practice Guidance (ID:41-004-20190509) which indicates that neighbourhood plans should address the development and use of land. It also includes a series of non-land use community action projects in Section 11 of the Plan.
- 7.5 I have addressed the policies in the order that they appear in the submitted Plan.
- 7.6 For clarity, this section of the report comments on all the Plan's policies.
- 7.7 Where modifications are recommended to policies they are highlighted in bold print. Any associated or free-standing changes to the text of the Plan are set out in italic print.

The initial parts of the Plan (Sections 1 to 5)

- 7.8 The Plan is well-organised and presented. It has been prepared with much attention to detail and local pride. It makes an appropriate distinction between the policies and their supporting text.
- 7.9 The initial elements of the Plan set the scene for the policies. They are proportionate to the neighbourhood area and the subsequent policies. The Introduction sets the scene for the Plan. It properly identifies the Plan period.
- 7.10 Section 2 provides information about the parish. It identifies the neighbourhood area and provides interesting and comprehensive details which help to set the scene for the eventual policies. It also provides information about the development plan in South Norfolk.
- 7.11 Section 3 comments about the way in which the Plan was prepared. The breakdown of events overlaps with the details in the Consultation Statement. It is presented in an attractive and easily-understood format.
- 7.12 Section 4 sets out the Vision for the parish as follows:

'Tasburgh will continue to be a safe, cohesive, community orientated village with accessible and well-used village amenities. It will be well connected for pedestrians

and cyclists. Any development will reflect current and future housing needs and be environmentally sustainable. Our local heritage assets will be recognised, and designated greenspaces will be protected.'

- 7.13 Section 4 also sets out a series of Objectives. They form the basis for the way in which the policies are structured. This is best practice.
- 7.14 Section 5 sets out the format of the remainder of the document. In addition, it introduces The Tasburgh Design Guidance and Codes and the community action projects as set described in Chapter 11 of the Plan.
- 7.15 The remainder of this section of the report addresses each policy in turn in the context set out in paragraphs 7.5 to 7.7 of this report.

TAS1: Natural Assets

- 7.16 The policy takes a comprehensive approach to natural assets. It identifies a series of such assets in the parish.
- 7.17 The policy itself has two main parts. The first is that where loss or damage of an asset is unavoidable, the development concerned shall provide for appropriate replacement planting or appropriate natural features on site together with a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting. The second is that all development proposals should retain existing features of biodiversity value (including hedgerow and field margins, trees, veteran trees, grass verges, ancient grasslands, ponds, and drainage ditches). This part of the policy also advises that development proposals should identify how they will provide a minimum 10 percent net gain in biodiversity.
- 7.18 In general the policy takes a positive approach to the natural assets in the parish. It has regard to Section 15 of the NPPF. However, within this broader context, I recommend the following package of recommended modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to allow SNC to be able to apply its contents in a clear and consistent fashion:
- the repositioning of the commentary about Local Green Spaces (Policy TAS2) into the supporting text;
 - the incorporation of the potential for mitigation/compensation measures into the Loss of Natural Assets section; and
 - the introduction of a proportionate element into the 'Enhancing Biodiversity' section to acknowledge that different proposals will have different impacts on the policy.
- 7.19 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Delete 'In addition to the Local Green Spaces (policy TAS2)'

Replace the Loss of Natural Asset section with: 'Where loss or damage is unavoidable, the development shall provide for appropriate replacement planting or appropriate natural features on site together with a method statement

for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting. Where this approach is not practicable, appropriate off-site mitigation/compensation should be incorporated into the development proposal. In either case, a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of the planting should be included in the proposal.'

In the 'Enhancing Biodiversity' section replace 'All development proposals' with 'As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals'

At the end of paragraph 6.3 add: 'Policy TAS1 Addresses natural assets. Policy TAS2 addresses local green spaces. Other policies in this part of the Plan comment about important views, climate change and dark skies.'

TAS2: Local Green Spaces

- 7.20 This policy proposes the designation of six local green spaces (LGSs). The approach taken is underpinned by the comprehensive details in Appendix C. The proposed LGSs vary from incidental green spaces in Upper Tasburgh to the attractive Burrfield Park in Lower Tasburgh to the Playing Fields by the Village Hall.
- 7.21 I looked at the proposed LGS carefully during the visit. Based on all the information available to me, including my own observations, I am satisfied that the proposed LGSs comfortably comply with the three tests in paragraph 106 of the NPPF. Burrfield Park (LGS3) and the Playing Fields (LGS1) are precisely the types of green spaces which the authors of the NPPF would have had in mind in preparing national policy on this important matter.
- 7.22 In addition, I am satisfied that their proposed designation would accord with the more general elements of paragraph 105 of the NPPF. Firstly, I am satisfied that the designations are consistent with the local planning of sustainable development. They do not otherwise prevent sustainable development coming forward in the neighbourhood area and no such development has been promoted or suggested. Secondly, I am satisfied that the LGSs are capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period. They are an established element of the local environment and have existed in their current format for many years. In addition, no evidence was brought forward during the examination that would suggest that the proposed LGSs would not endure beyond the end of the Plan period.
- 7.23 The policy follows the matter-of-fact approach in paragraph 107 of the NPPF. As such I am satisfied that it meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

TAS3: Important Local Views

- 7.24 The policy identifies ten important local views. The details of the views are set out in paragraph 6.27 of the Plan. I looked at a selection of the views during the visit. In general terms they relate to the interface between Upper and Lower Tasburgh and the surrounding countryside. I am satisfied that the views have been carefully selected.

- 7.25 The policy has two parts. The first relates to wider landscape setting and the second relates to the important local views. The latter comments that development proposals within or affecting an important local view must demonstrate how they have taken account of the view concerned.
- 7.26 In the round I am satisfied that the policy takes a positive approach to this matter. It has regard to Section 15 of the NPPF. However, within this broader context, I recommend the following package of recommended modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF:

- the use of wording more appropriate to a neighbourhood plan; and
- a remodelling of the second part of the policy so that it will be able to be applied consistently by SNC through the development management process.

- 7.27 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In the opening part of the policy replace ‘must’ with ‘should’

Replace the final part of the policy with: ‘Development proposals within or affecting an important local view should demonstrate how they have responded positively to the view concerned and safeguarded its integrity and local importance.’

TAS4: Climate change, flood risk and surface water drainage issues

- 7.28 This is a comprehensive policy based on detailed evidence and flood profile issues. I saw the importance of the River Tas during the visit.
- 7.29 The policy comments that all development will be expected to demonstrate how it can mitigate its own flooding and drainage impacts, avoid an increase of flooding elsewhere and seek to achieve lower than greenfield runoff rates for flooding. It also advises that proposals for new development should take account of the advice and guidance on surface water drainage and the mitigation of flood risk obtainable from Norfolk County Council (as Lead Local Flood Authority) and the relevant Internal Drainage Board (as statutory Drainage Board for the Plan area). It also comments that large development should include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. It also makes specific comments about land on Low Road.
- 7.30 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to this important matter. I saw during the visit that built development in the parish has a sensitive relationship with the River Tas. In addition, the policy has regard to Section 14 of the NPPF. However, within this overall context I recommend the following package of modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF:
- the introduction of a proportionate element into the policy to acknowledge that individual proposals will have different impacts (if any) on surface water drainage issues and flooding;
 - a restructuring of the policy to ensure that the proportionate element can be applied throughout its various elements;

- the definition of major/larger developments in the supporting text;
- the relocation of the detailed element of the policy about land around Low Road into the supporting text. This acknowledges that it highlights a specific part of the parish to which the policy would have a particular significance rather than being a land use policy.

7.31 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should:

- **demonstrate how they can mitigate their own flooding and drainage impacts, avoid an increase of flooding elsewhere and seek to achieve lower than greenfield runoff rates for flooding (see figure 20 flood risk);**
- **respond positively to the advice and guidance on surface water drainage and the mitigation of flood risk obtainable from Norfolk County Council (as Lead Local Flood Authority) and the relevant Internal Drainage Board (as statutory Drainage Board for the Plan area); and**
- **where appropriate, mitigate and adapt to climate change.**

Proposals for major development should include sustainable drainage systems unless it is impracticable to do so.’

In paragraph 6.29 replace ‘This is identified in policy TAS4’ with ‘This part of the parish is particularly important for the application of Policy TAS4.’

At the end of paragraph 6.31 add: ‘Policy TAS4 has a proportionate element to acknowledge that individual proposals will have different impacts (if any) on surface water drainage issues and flooding. The policy has a specific requirement for major developments. For clarity a major development is that as defined by the Town & Country Planning Development Management Procedure Order (2015).’

TAS5: Dark skies

7.32 This policy seeks to safeguard the dark skies in the parish. It comments that development proposals must take account of existing dark skies and seek to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light. It also advises that street lighting will not be permitted on any development, unless there is a clear and compelling need to do so, for example highway safety on A140. In relation to individual dwellings the policy comments that any lighting necessary for security or safety should be designed to minimise the impact on dark skies by, for example, minimal light spillage, use of downlighting, movement sensitive lighting and restricting hours of lighting. Finally, it advises that lighting likely to cause disturbance or risk to wildlife should not be permitted.

7.33 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to this matter. I recommend modifications to the wording used to ensure that they are more appropriate to a

neighbourhood plan and take a non-prescriptive approach. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In the first part of the policy replace ‘must’ with ‘should’ and ‘permitted’ with ‘supported’

In the second part of the policy replace ‘permitted’ with ‘supported’

TAS6: Design guidelines and codes

- 7.34 This is an important policy within the overall context of the Plan. It advises that the design of all new development in Tasburgh should reflect the parish’s local distinctiveness and character. It also comments that proposals for new development should accord with the parish-wide principles laid out in the Tasburgh Design Guidelines and Codes. In addition, it sets out specific codes for the three identified character areas.
- 7.35 In the round the policy takes a very positive approach to design. The combination of the policy and the Design Guidelines and Codes represents an excellent local response to Section 12 of the NPPF. However, in this positive context I recommend that the second part of the policy is modified so that it can be applied in a proportionate way by SNC through the development management process. This acknowledges that individual proposals will have different impacts (if any) on the principles in the Design Guidelines and Codes.
- 7.36 SNC comments that it would be more appropriate for the allocated housing site in the SSAPD, and as proposed to be allocated in the emerging VCHAP, to be shown within the Upper Tasburgh Character Area rather than the Transition Area (between Upper and Lower Tasburgh). Based on all the available evidence, including my visit to the parish and TPC’s response to the clarification note, I recommend that the boundary between the Upper Tasburgh Character Area and the Transition Area in the Design Guidelines and Codes is revised so that the proposed housing allocation is within the Upper Tasburgh Character Area. I have reached this conclusion based principally on the way in which the proposed housing allocation relates to the character and appearance of Upper Tasburgh and physical and natural features in this part of the parish.
- 7.37 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In the second part of the policy replace ‘Proposals for new development should accord with the parish-wide principles laid out’ with ‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, proposals for new development should accord with the parish-wide principles set out’

In the Design Guidance and Codes include the parcels of land as proposed to be allocated for housing development in the emerging VCHAP within the Upper Tasburgh Character Area rather than the Transition Area (between Upper and Lower Tasburgh).

TAS7: Housing location, pattern, and scale

- 7.38 This is an important policy in the Plan. It comments that new residential development should be focused in Upper Tasburgh, where it can best integrate with existing development, taking advantage of the proximity to existing community infrastructure, public transport on A140 and safe pedestrian and cycle routes. It also advises that proposals for all new development should enhance the form and character of the village and be physically connected to the existing built-up area.
- 7.39 The policy also includes specific sections on Infill development and the Gap between Upper Tasburgh and Lower Tasburgh.
- 7.40 In general the policy takes a positive approach to this matter. It will help to ensure that new development is in a sustainable location close to existing community facilities.
- 7.41 SNC makes specific comments about the section of the policy on the gap between the two settlements. I have taken account of these comments and TPC's response to the clarification note. On the balance of the evidence, I am satisfied that the policy wording is appropriate. Its opening element is positively-worded. This positive approach is then supplemented by a negative approach for proposals which do not follow the advice in the initial part of the policy. I do however recommend that a clearer and more precise map, setting out the precise boundary of the gap between the two areas, is included within the Plan either in addition to figure 4 or within the context of figure 4.
- 7.42 Elements of the policy comment that (as appropriate to their details) development will 'only' be supported where criteria are met. This presents a somewhat negative approach. In its response to the clarification note, TPC advised that:
- 'We have a concern about how the policy may be interpreted without the word 'only', with a risk that an application is determined based on one policy and not considering other policies'*
- 7.43 I have considered this matter carefully. On the balance of the evidence, I recommend the deletion of the uses of 'only'. Whilst I note the concerns of TPC, the development plan should be read as a whole. In any event, the policy itself is sufficiently robust on its environmental expectations.
- 7.44 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In the 'Location of New Housing' and 'Infill and Windfall Development' sections of the policy delete 'only'

Include a clearer and more precise map, setting out the precise boundary of the gap between Upper and Lower Tasburgh in the Plan either in addition to figure 4 or within the context of figure 4.

TAS8: Housing mix

- 7.45 This is a wide-ranging policy on housing mix. It is underpinned by comprehensive evidence including the Tasburgh Housing Market Assessment. It has four related elements as follows:
- major residential development proposals (10 or more homes or a site with an area of 0.5 hectares or more) should provide for a housing mix (size, type, and tenure) that meets housing needs, with a view to enabling a mixed community;
 - major residential development proposals should provide a well-balanced mix of housing sizes;
 - a greater proportion of Affordable Housing is required in Tasburgh above the minimum required by the Local Plan; and
 - proposals for specialist housing are encouraged, particularly for older people.
- 7.46 In general terms the policy takes a positive approach to these matters. In this broader context I recommend the following package of modifications to the policy to bring the clarity required by the NPPF. In addition, they acknowledge that some of its elements may not be either practicable and/or viable on all development sites in general, or the development of the site to the north of Church Road (as allocated in the SSAPD and as proposed to be allocated in the emerging VCHAP):
- replace the first sentence of the 'Affordable Housing' section to incorporate technical revisions proposed by SNC;
 - to ensure that the approach towards the size and type of properties has regard to practical and viability considerations; and
 - to recast the approach taken in the Specialist Housing section of the policy so that it has the clarity required by the NPPF.
- 7.47 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development. In addition, it will help to deliver new housing which responds positively to the needs of local people and complement the work of other agencies on this important matter.

Replace the first sentence of the 'Affordable Housing' section with: 'In line with the findings of the Tasburgh Housing Needs Assessment, opportunities should be taken to maximise the delivery of affordable housing, where appropriate, above the minimum required by the Local Plan.'

In the second sentence of the 'Affordable Housing' section replace 'Major residential development proposals' with 'Where it is both practicable and viable to do so, major residential development proposals'

Replace the 'Specialist Housing' section of the policy with: 'Proposals for specialist housing, particularly for older people, will be supported. Wherever practicable new homes should be built to the adopted accessible and adaptable dwellings standards.'

TAS9: Land north of Church Road and west of Tasburgh School

- 7.48 The policy addresses the land to the north of Church Road and to the west of the School. It is an allocated housing site in the adopted SSAPD and in the emerging VCHAP. I looked at the proposed site, the School, and Henry Preston Road carefully during the visit.
- 7.49 The policy comments that in addition to the requirements of the (emerging) VCHAP, and other relevant policies within the submitted Plan, the development of the site should include a series of matters including a mix of houses, a play area and guidance on the location of parking spaces.
- 7.50 In principle the refinement of a policy in an adopted or emerging Local Plan in a neighbourhood plan is entirely appropriate. In this broader context I note the proposed development of the site is not opposed in principle by TPC and that, other than specific comments from SNC the development of the site is not contested.
- 7.51 I sought advice from TPC about the evidence to justify the delivery of more open space than needed to meet the additional demands arising from development. In its response to the clarification note it advised that:
- ‘delivery of open space at the front of the development is to for amenity and aesthetic value (reference to Objective 2, ‘complement the character of Tasburgh’). Para 7.16 and 7.17 covers the justification for both comments. Criteria (b) is to serve the development and community. Criteria (e) is for landscape and aesthetic value.’*
- 7.52 I have considered this matter carefully and have considered SNC’s comments on the matter. On the balance of the evidence, I recommend the deletion of both criteria b and e. Neither the relevant policy in the adopted SSAPD nor the policy in the emerging VCHAP include the requirement for open space, and TPC has not provided detailed evidence to justify such a requirement. Nevertheless, I recommend that the aspirations in the submitted policy on this point are relocated into the supporting text to act as a basis for detailed discussions which may take place on the eventual development of the site.
- 7.53 As submitted the criterion on vehicular access conflicts with Policy VC TAS1 of the emerging VCHAP. SNC advises the requirement for vehicular access from both Church Road and Henry Preston Road (in the emerging VCHAP) was determined following advice from Norfolk County Council Highways to make the access acceptable. In this context I sought clarity from TPC about the way in which it has addressed this matter. In its response to the clarification note it advised that:
- ‘the justification for this is based on local knowledge and representation as stated in paragraph 7.17. Criteria (f) – this is strongly felt by the community on the grounds of further traffic congestion and pedestrian safety next to the primary school.’*
- 7.54 I have considered this matter very carefully. Plainly a secondary access to the site off Henry Preston Road could increase the use of this Road and to add to the peak activity at the beginning and end of the school day. Nevertheless, as SNC advise the requirement on access in the VCHAP reflects the advice from Norfolk County Council

in its capacity as the highway authority. In addition, any safety concerns about the School can be assessed and/or incorporated into detailed designs for the development of the site. On this basis I recommend the deletion of the criterion.

- 7.55 I also recommend consequential modifications to the supporting text on this matter.
- 7.56 Finally I recommend other modifications to the wording of the policy so that it will have the clarity required by the NPPF and be able to be delivered in a clear way by SNC through the development management process. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will help to boost the supply of housing land in the parish. In doing so it will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace ‘the site should include the following’ with ‘the development of land to the north of Church Road for residential purposes should incorporate the following matters:’

In a. replace ‘See TAS 8’ with ‘as set out in Policy TAS8 of this Plan’

Delete b.

Replace c. with ‘A density of houses, plots and street layouts that responds positively to the location of the site on the north-western edge of Upper Tasburgh.’

Replace d. with ‘Wherever practicable, car parking should be located to the side or rear of properties. Otherwise, parking should be screened from the street, preferably through soft landscaping.’

Delete e. and f.

Replace h. with: ‘Street lighting within the development should respond positively to the contents of Policy TAS5’

At the end of paragraph 7.16 add: ‘These opportunities may act as a basis for detailed discussions which take place on the eventual development of the site between South Norfolk Council and the landowner/developer.’

Delete paragraph 7.17

TAS10: Business development and digital connectivity

- 7.57 This policy comments about business development. It has three related elements as follows:
- new or expanded business and employment uses will be supported where proposals have taken account of the Tasburgh Design Guidance and Codes and demonstrated respect for the character of the rural area, residential amenity, and highway safety. Light industrial and retail development on the A140 is particularly encouraged where it provides local employment

opportunities. All new or expanded business units should be adjacent to existing businesses on the A140 (this does not apply to small businesses);

- new dwellings should provide for high-speed digital connectivity where practical and achievable; and
- development providing space for homeworking, including home offices, will be supported.

7.58 The policy includes both general and parish-based elements. In the round it takes a positive approach to the matter and has regard to Section 6 of the NPPF. However, in this wider context I recommend the following modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to ensure that appropriate environmental safeguards are in place:

- the use of wording more appropriate to a neighbourhood plan;
- the incorporation of the element about new business units being adjacent to existing business into the principal part of the policy;
- the deletion of the reference for the provision of access to Broadband as this matter is now addressed in Part R of the Building Regulations; and
- the inclusion of environmental safeguards into the element of the policy on home working

7.59 I also recommend that the title of the policy is modified to reflect the deletion of the digital connectivity from the policy. Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of each of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the policy with:

‘Proposals for new or expanded business and employment uses will be supported where they have taken account of the Tasburgh Design Guidance and Codes and respect the character of the rural area, the amenity of any residential properties in the immediate locality, and highway safety. Proposals for light industrial and retail developments on the A140 adjacent to existing business premises will be particularly supported where they provide local employment opportunities.

Development proposals for homeworking, including home offices, will be supported where they respect the character of their immediate locality, and the amenity of any nearby residential properties.’

Replace the policy’s title with: ‘Business Development’

TAS11: Historic core and Non-designated Heritage Assets

7.60 This is a wide ranging-policy on heritage assets. It has three key parts as follows:

- the area shown on figure 28 is identified locally as an important ‘historic core’ due to the setting of the Tasburgh Enclosure (Scheduled Monument) and St Mary the Virgin Church, round tower church (Grade I listed building);
- buildings or structures (figure 29) are identified as Non-designated Heritage Assets due to their locally important character and historic features; and

- development proposals should conserve these heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

7.61 The policy takes a very positive approach to heritage matters. The identification of an important historic core is very distinctive to the parish. I looked at some of the proposed non-designated heritage assets. It was clear that they had been carefully-selected. The policy approach taken has regard to paragraph 209 of the NPPF

7.62 I am satisfied that the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

TAS12: Public rights of way, footpaths, and cycleways

7.63 This policy has two related parts. The first advises that opportunities to enhance and join up networks of footpaths and cycleways (including public rights of way) that are suitable for all users, should be included within the design of new residential developments. It also advises that footpaths and cycle ways should be visible and separate from roads where possible, for example such as Grove Lane. The second part of the policy advises that the provision of new footpaths and cycleways will be supported.

7.64 The policy takes a positive approach to this issue. I saw the importance of the local footpath network during the visit and the way in which it added to accessibility and social well-being. I recommend that the first part of the policy is modified so that it can be applied in a proportionate way. Plainly different proposals will present different opportunities (or none) to connect to the existing network.

7.65 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the first sentence of the first part of the policy with:

‘As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, the design of new residential developments should include opportunities to enhance and join up networks of footpaths and cycleways (including Public Rights of Way) that are suitable for all users, within their designs and layouts.’

TAS13: Existing and new community infrastructure

7.66 This is an important policy in the Plan. It identifies nine community facilities. It has three related elements:

- improvements to existing community infrastructure will be supported in principle;
- proposals for change of use, involving a potential loss of existing community infrastructure, will only be supported where they meet specific criteria; and
- proposals for the following new community infrastructure will be supported.

7.67 The policy takes a positive approach to this matter and acknowledges the importance of community facilities to the well-being of the parish. I am also satisfied that the identified facilities are important within the parish and are worthy of the approach taken

in the policy. However, in this wider context I recommend the following modifications to bring the clarity required by the NPPF and to ensure that appropriate environmental safeguards are in place:

- the Plan specifically identifies the facilities for the purpose of the policy rather than making a factual statement;
- ensuring that the element of the policy about the improvement of existing facilities is shifted to the first part of the policy; and
- ensuring that this element of the policy includes environmental safeguards.

7.68 Otherwise, the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In the first part of the policy replace ‘Tasburgh parish has the following existing community infrastructure (figure 34):’ with ‘The Plan identifies the following existing community infrastructure (as shown on figure 34):’

At the end of the first part of the policy add: ‘Proposals for the improvement, adaptation or extension of existing community infrastructure will be supported where they comply with other development plan policies.’

In the second part of the policy delete ‘Improvements to existing community infrastructure will be supported in principle.’

TAS14: The village hall site

7.69 The Plan comments that the context for the policy is that as Tasburgh grows, an improved Village Hall may be needed. Through local consultation it has been recognised that there is potential to extend the existing building, refurbish it, or replace the building all together (in the long term) which would enable further community and/or business use. As working arrangements have changed for many since the Covid pandemic, the Plan advises that there is more openness to working from home and within a local community building.

7.70 The policy advises that any proposals for the redevelopment of the Village Hall site will be supported in principle. It comments that this could take the form of an extension to the existing building, or a replacement building, and should enable further community and/or business use. Specific uses to be delivered in a new village hall are also identified in the policy.

7.71 This is an important policy within the overall context of the Plan. I saw the importance of the Village Hall during the visit, and its central location within the Parish. The policy takes a positive approach to the matter. However, I recommend that the opening element of the first part of the policy is reconfigured so that it better expresses the various development options and the way in which different component uses would be supported. I also recommend a modification to the second part of the policy to bring the clarity required by the NPPF.

7.72 Otherwise the policy meets the basic conditions. It will contribute to the delivery of the social and the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Replace the opening element of the first part of the policy with:

‘Proposals for the redevelopment of the Village Hall site, an extension to the existing building, and/or a replacement building will be supported. The incorporation of the following uses within a new or reconfigured Village Hall will be particularly supported:’

In the second part of the policy replace ‘possible’ with ‘practicable’

Community action projects

- 7.73 The Plan includes a series of community action projects. They are non-land use issues which have naturally arisen whilst the Plan was being prepared.
- 7.74 The projects are as follows:
- repair/replacement of Village Hall play area;
 - provide a cycle path between Tasburgh and Long Stratton;
 - investigate potential for linking the Boudicca Way with a pathway from Fairstead Lane northwards;
 - investigate other potential linking footpaths within the parish;
 - the provision of additional allotment provision; and
 - the development of long-term plans for burial spaces within the parish.
- 7.75 I am satisfied that the projects are appropriate and distinctive to the parish. In addition, they are properly set out in a separate part of the Plan in accordance with national guidance.

Monitoring and Review

- 7.76 Section 12 of the Plan addresses the monitoring and review process in a positive way. This is best practice.
- 7.77 Section 5 of this report and the Basic Conditions Statement have commented about the relationship between the submitted Plan and the emerging GNLP. Given the importance of the adoption of the emerging plan on the planning policy context in the neighbourhood area I recommend that paragraph 12.5 of the Plan is expanded so that it provides guidance to residents and the development industry alike about the way in which the Plan will respond to the adoption of that Plan. This process should also relate to the emerging VCHAP
- 7.78 The language used in the recommended modifications acknowledges that in the same way that there is no requirement for a town council or parish council to produce a neighbourhood plan, there is no requirement for those organisations to review a ‘made’ neighbourhood plan. Nevertheless, the recommended wording has been designed to recognise that where there is a conflict between different elements of the development plan, the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document to become part of the development plan. Plainly a review of a made Plan will have the ability to keep its contents up-to-date and to be aligned to the wider development plan throughout the Plan period.

At the end of paragraph 12.5 add:

‘Any neighbourhood plan operates within the wider context provided by national planning policy and local planning policy. The Parish Council will monitor and assess the implications of any changes to national or local planning policy on the Plan throughout the Plan period. Where necessary it will consider the need for a partial review of the Plan.

The eventual adoption of both the Greater Norwich Local Plan and the South Norfolk Village Cluster Housing Allocation Plan could bring forward important changes to local planning policy. 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 both these Plans.’

Other Matters - General

- 7.79 This report has recommended a series of modifications both to the policies and to the supporting text in the submitted Plan. Where consequential changes to the text are required directly because of my recommended modification to the policy concerned, I have highlighted them in this report. However other changes to the general text may be required elsewhere in the Plan because of the recommended modifications to the policies. Similarly, changes may be necessary to paragraph numbers in the Plan or to accommodate other administrative matters. It will be appropriate for SNC and TPC to have the flexibility to make any necessary consequential changes to the general text. I recommend accordingly.

Modification of general text (where necessary) to achieve consistency with the modified policies and to accommodate any administrative and technical changes.

Other Matters – Specific

- 7.80 SNC has made a series of helpful comments on the Plan. I have included them in the recommended modifications on a policy-by-policy basis where they are required to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions.
- 7.81 In a more general way, SNC advises that while maps have been provided for individual policies, it does not appear that a comprehensive Policies Map, showing all the areas affected by all policies, has been included. SNC suggests that this is provided in order that the Plan can be accessible and to assist policy presentation, in line with paragraph 16 e) of the NPPF. In its response to the clarification note, TPC acknowledged the importance of such an approach. I recommend accordingly.

Include a comprehensive Policies Map in the Plan

- 7.82 Norfolk County Council raises a series of technical comments in its capacity as the Lead Local Flood Authority. The incorporation of the comments into the Plan would add to its comprehensive approach to flooding and surface water drainage. However, as they are not needed to ensure that the Plan meets the basic conditions, I have not recommended modifications to the Plan on this matter.

8 Summary and Conclusions

Summary

- 8.1 The Plan sets out a range of policies to guide and direct development proposals in the period up to 2038. It is distinctive in addressing a specific set of issues that have been identified and refined by the wider community to safeguard the character and setting of the neighbourhood area and to designate a series of Local Green Spaces.
- 8.2 Following the independent examination of the Plan, I have concluded that the Tasburgh Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the basic conditions for the preparation of a neighbourhood development plan subject to a series of recommended modifications.

Conclusion

- 8.3 On the basis of the findings in this report, I recommend to South Norfolk Council that, subject to the incorporation of the modifications set out in this report, the Tasburgh Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum.

Other Matters

- 8.4 I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood area. In my view, the neighbourhood area is entirely appropriate for this purpose and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore recommend that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the neighbourhood area as approved in May 2020.
- 8.5 I am grateful to everyone who has helped in any way to ensure that this examination has run in a smooth manner. The responses to the clarification note were detailed, informative and delivered in a very timely fashion.

Andrew Ashcroft
Independent Examiner
5 February 2024