

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF ASKERSWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EXAMINER: David Hogger BA MSc MRTPI MCIHT

Howard Atkinson
Askerswell Neighbourhood Forum

Nick Cardnell
Senior Planning Officer
Dorset Councils Partnership

Examination Ref: 01/DH/ANP

Via email: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

28 June 2018

Dear Professor Atkinson and Mr Cardnell

ASKERSWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION

Following the submission of the Askerswell Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for examination, I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters and I also have a small number of preliminary questions for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and the Neighbourhood Forum (NF).

1. Examination Documentation

I can confirm that I am satisfied that I have received a complete submission of the draft Plan and accompanying documentation, including the Basic Conditions Statement, the Consultation Statement and the Regulation 16 representations, to enable me to undertake the examination.

Subject to my detailed assessment of the draft NP, I have not identified any very significant and obvious flaws that might lead me to advise that the examination should not proceed.

2. Site Visit

I intend to undertake a site visit to the neighbourhood plan area during the week commencing 2nd July 2018. This will assist in my assessment of the draft Plan, including the issues identified in the representations.

The site visit will be undertaken unaccompanied. It is very important that I am not approached to discuss any aspects of the Plan or the neighbourhood area, as this may be perceived to prejudice my independence and risk compromising the fairness of the examination process.

3. Written Representations

At this stage, I consider the examination can be conducted solely by the written representations procedure, without the need for a hearing. However, I will reserve the option to convene a hearing should a matter(s) come to light where I consider that a hearing is necessary to ensure the adequate examination of an issue, or to ensure that a person has a fair chance to put a case.

4. Further Clarification

I have a small number of initial questions seeking further clarification from the LPA and the NF, which I have set out in the Annex to this letter. I would be grateful if you could provide a written response within two weeks of receipt of this letter.

5. Examination Timetable

As you will be aware, the intention is to examine the NP (including conduct of the site visit) with a view to providing a draft report (for 'fact checking') within 4-6 weeks. However, as I have raised a small number of questions I must provide sufficient opportunity to reply. Consequentially, the examination timetable may be extended. Please be assured that I will seek mitigate any delay as far as is practicable. The IPe office team will seek to keep you updated on the anticipated delivery date of the draft report.

If you have any process questions related to the conduct of the examination, which you would like me to address, please do not hesitate to contact the office team in the first instance.

In the interests of transparency, may I prevail upon you to ensure a copy of this letter and any subsequent responses, are placed on the Local Authority and Qualifying Body's websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Your sincerely



Examiner

Annex

From my initial reading of the Askerswell Neighbourhood Plan and the supporting evidence I have a small number of questions for West Dorset District Council (LPA) and the Askerswell Neighbourhood Forum (NF). I have requested the submission of responses within two weeks of receipt of this letter but an earlier response would be welcome.

Questions for the LPA

1. Concerns have been expressed regarding the size of the steering group and the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process. However, I note that the LPA agreed the Forum constitution and that it raises no concerns on these matters in its comments on the NP dated April 2018. Could the LPA confirm that it is satisfied with the procedural and administrative approach taken by the Forum and that it complies with guidance issued by the Secretary of State?
2. Could the LPA explain why policy E1.2 should only relate to 'discrete' views from 'within the built form' and explain what is meant by 'discrete'?
3. Could the LPA comment on the relationship between policy E2 (which seeks to protect special landscape and historic features) and policies ENV1 and ENV10 of the adopted Local Plan which relate to landscape and townscape setting and the protection of the landscape and panoramic views. Does the LPA consider that policy E2 is in general conformity with the Local Plan strategic policies?
4. Issues have been raised regarding the provision of affordable housing (AH), particularly to meet the needs of existing villagers. Could the LPA confirm that policies in the adopted Local Plan support the provision of AH where appropriate and justified, for example on a small-scale site adjoining a settlement such as Askerswell?

Question for the NF

1. Policy E2.1 includes support for the retention of a comprehensive list of landscape and other features. However, it is not clear to the reader exactly where these features are. Policies should be clear and unambiguous and there should be sufficient precision to provide confidence to the decision-maker when determining planning applications. Therefore, could the NF provide a clear plan showing the location of these features which (if I so conclude) could be included in the NP?