

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE
BERE REGIS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW**
EXAMINER: Andrew Mead BSc (Hons) MRTPI MIQ

Examination Ref: 01/AM/BRNPR

Amanda Crocker
Parish Clerk
Bere Regis Parish Council

Philip Reese
Senior Planning Policy Officer
Dorset Council

Via email

28 July 2026

Dear Ms Crocker and Mr Reese

Following the submission for examination of the Bere Regis Neighbourhood Plan Review (the Plan), I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters including my determination in respect of the appropriate examination process for the reviewed Plan.

1. Examination documentation

I can confirm that I am satisfied that I have received a complete submission of the draft Plan (as proposed to be reviewed); the Basic Conditions and Consultation Statements; the Regulation 16 representations; and the statements from both Bere Regis Parish Council (BRPC) and Dorset Council (DC) in relation to whether the modifications contained in the draft Plan are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the Neighbourhood Development Plan which the draft Plan would replace, giving reasons why.

This has provided sufficient information to undertake my initial determination under paragraph 10(1) of Schedule A2 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

Subject to my further detailed assessment of the draft Plan, I have not at this initial stage identified any significant and obvious flaws that might lead me to advise that the examination should not proceed.

2. Determination under Paragraph 10(1) of Schedule A2

I am required to determine whether the modifications contained in the draft Plan are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the Neighbourhood Development Plan which the draft Plan would replace. The purpose of this determination is to establish the appropriate examination process for the draft Plan which will, amongst other things, affect whether or not the draft Plan will need to be the subject of a referendum if it is to be made.

The BRPC state in their Modifications Statement that it has been modified by the removal from the made Plan of Policies BR1, BR4 and BR8 because they are no longer required, as they duplicate a policy in the adopted Purbeck Local Plan or the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Policy BR6 has been removed because the policy was prepared in 2012: the evidence is out of date.

BRPC consider that the removal of the policies is a material modification, but that it does not change the nature of the Plan.

In addition, Policies BR7 (new Policy BR1a-e.), BR2, BR3 and BR4 have been rephrased. It is also noted the other changes are relatively minor in nature; and the Plan period is not extended. The qualifying body are of the view that the proposed changes are not so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the Plan.

DC have compared the policies in the made Plan with those of the submitted review Plan and have considered the contents of each policy, along with the Modifications Statement prepared and submitted by the Parish Council. DC has also considered government guidance, in particular, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on 'updating a neighbourhood plan'. PPG Reference ID: 41-106-20190509 summarises the three types of modification that can be made to a neighbourhood plan. These are:

- Minor (non-material) modifications to a neighbourhood plan or order are those which would not materially affect the policies in the plan or permission granted by the order. These may include correcting errors, such as a reference to a supporting document, and would not require examination or a referendum.
- Material modifications which do not change the nature of the plan or order would require examination but not a referendum. This might, for example, entail the addition of a design code that builds on a pre-existing design policy, or the addition of a site or sites which, subject to the decision of the independent examiner, are not so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan.
- Material modifications which do change the nature of the plan or order would require examination and a referendum. This might, for example, involve allocating significant new sites for development.

DC notes that of the 9 original policies in the made Plan, 4 have been entirely deleted, and a fifth has been effectively replaced by a list of community assets. On the other hand, 3 policies are almost the same, receiving relatively minor changes. The residential allocations policy has been expanded considerably, from one policy into 5 separate policies. However, the residential allocations themselves are almost exactly the same.

Having read the qualifying body's Modifications Statement, DC understand the reasoning behind these changes. In summary, the policies marked for deletion are principally to avoid duplication with the new Purbeck Local Plan (adopted in 2024). The expanded residential allocations policies provide greater certainty to applicants, often drawing out requirements that were previously in the supporting text. DC note that the Plan period, vision and objectives all remain unchanged. All site allocations from the 2019 made Neighbourhood Plan are effectively carried forward, and the draft Plan does not add any additional site allocations.

In conclusion, therefore, DC's view is that the proposed modifications are not so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the Plan.

Having assessed all the written documents submitted, including the representations and relevant statements, I am content that the modifications proposed in the draft Plan are material but do not change the nature of the made Plan. Therefore, the examination can proceed under the terms of Schedule A2. As a consequence, should I recommend that the draft Plan be made (with or without examiner modifications), a referendum stage will not be a necessary part of the statutory process.

3. Site Visit

I intend to visit the Neighbourhood Plan Area later this week (week beginning 27 July 2026), which will assist in my assessment of the draft Plan, including the issues identified in the representations.

I may have some questions whilst drafting the report, which I will set out in writing should I require any further clarification.

4. 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 I consider there are exceptional reasons for doing so.

5. Examination Timetable

As you will be aware, the intention is to examine the draft Plan (including conduct of the site visit) with a view to providing a draft report (for 'fact checking') within 6-8 weeks of submission of the draft Plan.

However, in the event that I have a number of further questions seeking clarification as a result of my site visit, I will need to provide you with additional time to reply. Should this arise, please be assured that I will seek to mitigate any delay as far as is practicable. The IPe office team will keep you updated on the examination and, in due course, the 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 is placed on the BRPC and DC websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Mead

Examiner