

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE BRADFORD ABBAS AND CLIFTON MAYBANK

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

EXAMINER: Andrew Mead BSc (Hons) MRTPI MIQ

Examination Ref: 01/AM/BACMNP

Mrs Jenny Thomas
Chair of the Working Group and Parish Councillor

Nick Cardnell
Senior Planning Policy Officer
Dorset Council

Via email

23 September 2026

Dear Cllr Thomas and Mr Cardnell

Following the submission of the Bradford Abbas and Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) for examination, I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters. I also have five questions for Dorset Council and the Parish Council, set out in the Annex to this letter, to which I would like to receive a written response(s) by **Wednesday 7 October 2026**.

1. Examination Documentation

I can confirm that I am satisfied that I have received the draft Plan and accompanying documentation, including the Basic Conditions Statement; the Consultation Statement; the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report; and the Regulation 16 representations, to enable me to undertake the examination.

A new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in August 2026. However, for the purposes of this examination, I shall be assessing the Plan against the **December 2024 NPPF**. This is in accordance with the transitional provision set out in Paragraph 6, Annex A of the new NPPF. Therefore, unless otherwise stated, all references to the NPPF in relation to this examination are to the December 2024 version.

2. Site Visit

I intend to carry out a site visit to the neighbourhood plan area this week i.e. w/c commencing 21 September 2026. The site visit will assist in my assessment of the draft Plan, including the issues identified in the representations.

The 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.

I may have some additional questions, following my site visit, which I will set out in writing should I require any further clarification.

3 . Examiner Clarifications

From my initial assessment of the Plan and supporting documents, I have identified a number of matters where I require some additional information from Dorset Council and Bradford Abbas Parish Council.

I have five questions seeking further clarification, which I have set out in an Annex to this letter. I would be grateful if you can seek to provide a written response(s) by **Wednesday 6 October 2026**.

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 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.

5. Examination Timetable

As you will be aware, the intention is to examine the Plan (including conduct of the site visit) with a view to providing a draft report (for 'fact checking') within around 6 – 8 weeks of submission of the draft Plan. However, as I have raised the annexed questions, I must provide you with sufficient opportunity to reply. Consequentially, the examination timetable may be extended. Please be assured that I will aim to 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 that a copy of this letter is placed on the Bradford Abbas Parish Council and Dorset Council websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Andy Mead

Examiner

ANNEX

From my initial reading of the Bradford Abbas and Clifton Maybank Neighbourhood Development Plan, the supporting evidence and the representations that have been made to the Plan, I have the following questions for Dorset Council (DC) and the Qualifying Body (QB/BAPC). I have requested the submission of responses by **Wednesday 7 October 2026**.

Where I am requesting additional clarification, suggested text and similar, this is with a view to informing the specific terms of any relevant examiner modification(s) that I may recommend. Accordingly, all of the points set out below flow from the requirement to satisfy the Basic Conditions.

Specific questions of clarification to the QB and DC are listed below, but I am happy to receive comments from either party on any of the questions which are not directed at them in the first instance.

Examiner Questions

In March 2026, the government commenced sections 98 and 99 of the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023 which brings into force both new legal compliance and Basic Condition requirements for neighbourhood plans, which include the following additional assessments:

- i) so far as the qualifying body considers appropriate, having regard to the subject matter of the neighbourhood development plan, it is designed to secure that the development and use of land in the neighbourhood area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change; and
- ii) so far as the qualifying body considers appropriate, having regard to the subject matter of the neighbourhood development plan, it takes account of any local nature recovery strategy, under section 104 of the Environment Act 2021, that relates to all or part of the neighbourhood area.

Question 1 for DC. Climate Change.

In the Basic Conditions Statement (BCS)(page 6), the BRPC comment that climate change matters have been considered as part of the plan making process throughout the preparation of the Plan and include examples of policies which support the adaptation to climate change. Do DC agree with the statement regarding climate change?

Question 2 for DC. Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Given the comments about the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) in the BCS (pages 6 and 7), do DC agree that the Plan is broadly in accord with the policy of LNRS and that there are no clear conflicts with it?

Question 3 for BAPC and DC. Appropriate Assessment (AA).

The Habitats Regulations Assessment includes an AA (pages 15 and 16). Paragraphs 7.0.3 and 7.0.4 of the Conclusions state that adverse effects upon the integrity of the Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar Site from water quality can be avoided by inserting wording at the end of Policy 9 (Meeting Local Housing Need) in the plan stating that *“Housing development will only be supported if it can achieve phosphate neutrality in respect of the Somerset Levels & Moor Ramsar Site”*. It can only then be concluded that the Plan will not result in an adverse effect upon the integrity of a European Site. The addition of paragraph 2.9.1 to the Plan which was also sought has been made, but the addition to Policy 9 has not been included. It seems that I should remedy this by making an appropriate recommendation. Do the Councils agree?

Question 4 for BAPC. Policy 6. Important Local Green Spaces (LGS).

NPPF paragraph 107 states that LGS should only be designated where the green space is ... *“(b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife.”* I would be grateful for evidence to show how Gollops Ground, the Rose and Crown Pub garden and the Field opposite the Pub fulfil that criterion? I would also be pleased to know the cumulative area of the Gollops Ground, the Pub garden and the School Playing Fields LGS?

Question 5 for BAPC. Policy 10 Local Employment Opportunities.

For reasons described in the Regulation 16 representation, DC suggest rephrasing the second bullet point of the second paragraph of the policy to: *“any business use must remain ancillary and incidental to the occupation of the dwellinghouse.”* Please may I have comments from BAPC?