

Willoughton Neighbourhood Development Plan (West Lindsey)

Examination Arrangements

Purpose of this Note

This Note sets out the basis on which the examination will be undertaken. Its ambitions are two-fold:

- to comply with the NPIERS procedural guidance (April 2018); and
- to provide guidance for the Parish Council on the key stages through which the examination will progress.

The examination route map

Different examinations raise their own issues. Nevertheless, the following are the key components that will be applied to this examination:

Stage 1: Background Reading

This involves reading the submitted Plan and its supporting documents. I will also read the various representations and take them into account during the examination.

This task is now largely complete.

Stage 2: Visit to the neighbourhood area

This provides me with an opportunity to visit the neighbourhood area and look at specific issues and sites. Plainly not every component of the Plan needs to be viewed on the visit. Nevertheless, I will focus my time on looking at the issues that have arisen either from the background reading or which are fundamental to the Plan.

The visit will be unaccompanied. I will not meet with either the Parish Council or with any parties who have commented on the Plan. To do so would have the potential to affect the independence of the examination process.

At this stage I am planning to visit the neighbourhood area in the week beginning 14 January 2019.

Stage 3: Decision about the need for a hearing

The combination of the background reading and the unaccompanied visit will allow me to come to a view about the need or otherwise for a hearing. The legislation anticipates that the vast majority of examinations can proceed by way of written representations and without a hearing.

If a hearing is required, I will make separate arrangements with the District Council and the Parish Council. I will traditionally leave at least 10 working days between deciding on the need for a hearing and holding the hearing. A hearing will be held in the neighbourhood area wherever it is practicable to do so.

Stage 4: Clarification Note

I will issue a clarification note shortly after the visit has taken place. It will raise a series of questions that I have identified as a result of my background reading and the visit to the neighbourhood area. The answers to these questions will help me to understand the Plan better and, where appropriate, to recommend modifications to the Plan.

The clarification note will suggest a timescale for responses. However, this is a matter which I am happy should proceed at your pace, recognising that neighbourhood plans are traditionally prepared by parish councils and individuals on a voluntary basis.

Stage 5: The Examination Report

My report will be prepared throughout the examination period. Its general parts can be written early in the process. The elements of the report that overlap with the clarification note will not be produced until the responses to the Clarification Note are received.

I will prepare a fact check report before the final report. This gives an opportunity for the District Council and the Parish Council to comment on any factual inaccuracies and/or omissions. It will not present an opportunity for the examination to enter into another phase.

Other related matters

The length of the examination

Plainly different plans cover different issues. Neighbourhood plan examinations are inevitably linear and are directly affected by its range of policies and the number and complexity of the representations received.

However, on average an examination of a neighbourhood plan for a rural village would take between three and seven days. These working days will be spread over several weeks. This takes account of the examination route map. In the case of the Willoughton Plan I anticipate sending the fact check report towards the beginning of February 2019.

Documents

I will ask the District Council to display all examination-related documents on its website.

Contact arrangements

My principal contact will be Nev Brown at the District Council. In some cases, information and updates may be sent both to that Council and to the Parish Council.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

Willoughton Neighbourhood Development Plan

12 January 2019