

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE NEWTON FLOTMAN**

**NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024-2038**

EXAMINER: DEREK STEBBING BA (Hons) DipEP MRTPI

Paul Weeks  
Chair, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group  
Newton Flotman Parish Council

Iolo Jones  
Community Planning Officer  
South Norfolk Council

Examination Ref: 01/DAS/NFNP

6 May 2025

Dear Mr Weeks and Mr Jones

**NEWTON FLOTMAN NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMINATION**

Following the submission of the Newton Flotman Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) for examination, I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters. I also have a number of questions for the Newton Flotman Parish Council (the Qualifying Body) and South Norfolk Council (the District Council), to which I would like to receive a written response(s) by **Friday 30 May 2025** if possible.

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) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report and the Regulation 16 representations, to enable me to undertake the examination.

2. Site Visit

I will aim to carry out a site visit to the neighbourhood plan area during the week beginning 19 May 2025. 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. 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

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

I have five questions seeking further clarification, which I have set out in the Annex to this letter. I would be grateful if you can seek to provide a written response(s) by **Friday 30 May 2025**.

#### 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 6-8 weeks of submission of the draft Plan. However, as I have raised several questions, I must provide you with sufficient opportunity to reply. Consequentially, dependent on the timing of your response(s), the examination timetable may be extended. Should any delay arise, please be assured that I will aim to mitigate this 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 Parish Council and District Council websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

*Derek Stebbing*

Examiner

## ANNEX

From my initial reading of the Newton Flotman Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2038 (Submission Version dated February 2025), the supporting evidence and the representations that have been made to the Plan, I have the following five questions for the Qualifying Body and the District Council. I have requested the submission of responses **by Friday 30 May 2025**, although an earlier response would be much appreciated.

All of the points set out below flow from the requirement to satisfy the Basic Conditions.

### **Question 1: Re. South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (VCHAP) (Pages 11 and 12)**

Can the **District Council** please confirm the accuracy of the information set out at paragraphs 2.16 and 2.17, including Figure 5, in the draft Plan regarding the emerging VCHAP, and further provide me with additional details of the planning permission for 31 dwellings that has been granted for the development of Site VC NEW2 that is referenced at paragraphs 2.17 and 5.22 in the draft Plan.

Can the **District Council** please also advise me of the approved housing mix for the development of Site VC NEW2, including the quantum and percentage of Affordable Housing?

Finally, I would be grateful if the **District Council** can advise me of any further planning applications for residential development that may have been submitted on sites within the Neighbourhood Area since the submission of the draft Plan in February 2025?

### **Question 2: Re. Policy NF6 – Existing and New Community Infrastructure (Pages 38 and 39)**

As drafted, the final section of this Policy suggests that the community infrastructure listed as clauses a)-i) will be supported regardless of any other planning considerations. It therefore does not provide any effective guidance for development management purposes. Conversely, the preceding two parts of the Policy set criteria for the support of proposals affecting existing community infrastructure.

In my preliminary assessment, the siting and location of at least some of the potential new community infrastructure will require compliance with other development plan policies and an assessment of possible impacts upon other local amenities, including residential amenity. I also note that Section 9 of the draft Plan, which identifies possible community action projects, advises that *“there is some overlap with Policy NF6”*.

In my assessment, there should be no overlap between Policy NF6 and the possible community action projects, which are clearly aspirational at this stage and will be subject to further investigation.

Can the **Qualifying Body** therefore please review the final section of the Policy and provide me with a Note setting out possible revisions to the Policy text that address the matters that I have identified above?

### **Question 3: Re. Policy NF9 – Natural Assets and Biodiversity (Pages 46 and 47)**

As drafted, the first part of this Policy includes a wide range of important natural assets which should be conserved and enhanced where possible. It is possible to identify the location of some of these assets by reference to Figures 31 and 32, and also to some of the information in Section 6 of the

Data Profile (March 2024). However, some of the natural assets, such as field hedgerows and Roadside Nature Reserves, cannot be identified.

In view of the stated importance of these assets because of their landscape and/or biodiversity value, I consider that greater detail is required on such assets, particularly regarding their location, for the benefit of future users of the Plan. I note that paragraph 8.2 states that these *“have come from the knowledge of Newton Flotman residents and consultation”*. I also note that two Roadside Nature Reserves are proposed for designation as Local Green Spaces in Policy NF10. I further note that the District Council considers that this part of the Policy would be better placed as supporting text.

Can the **Qualifying Body** therefore please review this part of Policy NF9 and provide me with a Note setting out further information and details on those natural assets which are not readily identifiable within paragraphs 8.2-8.6 of the supporting text or on Figures 31 and 32?

The Qualifying Body may also wish to take account of the representation submitted by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust (**Ref. NF/NP-07**) which provides some additional information that is not presently included within the draft Plan.

#### **Question 4: Re. Local Green Spaces (Pages 48-59)**

In the assessment of the proposed Local Green Spaces, the addresses of Sites 1 and 6 (on pages 48 and 51) are missing from the specific site assessments. It is clear that these should be the ‘Alan Avenue green space’ and ‘Kings Green’ respectively, but I would be grateful for the **Qualifying Body’s** confirmation of that point.

I also consider that there should be more precise addresses for Sites 10 and 11, rather than the present descriptions. I would be grateful if the **Qualifying Body** can consider that matter and provide more suitable descriptors.

#### **Question 5: Re Policy NF13 – Localised Flooding (Page 65)**

In the copy of the draft Plan that has been supplied to me, the third paragraph of draft Policy text is incomplete. Can the **Qualifying Body** please provide me with the full text of the proposed Policy that should be the subject of this Examination?

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