

Waverley Borough Council's Regulation 16 Consultation for the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan ended on 19th March 2021. In total 199 comments were received although some respondents submitted multiple comments and others submitted an extensive response covering the entire document that was recorded as one comment.¹

At the beginning of April the Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to Andrew Ashcroft, the Independent Examiner. Mr Ashcroft sent a note about the examination process on 6th April.² This identified the following examination route map:

- Background Reading
- Visit to neighbourhood plan area
- Decision about the need for a hearing
- Clarification Note
- The Examination Report

A fact check report will also be prepared by him for the Town and Borough Council to consider prior to issuance of the Examination Report. Mr Ashcroft stated that he expects to prepare that report by mid-May.

On 21st April, Mr Ashcroft sent a Clarification Note.³ In his initial comments he compliments the Plan and states " The Plan is proportionate to the neighbourhood area and has focused on appropriate and distinctive matters." The Working Party has prepared responses to the questions in the Clarification Note and, as a result of his questions, proposed some minor wording changes to the plan as follows:

- At paragraph 3.3 in the Context and Reasoned Justification for policy H1, provided up to date details about the Surrey Hills AONB Boundary review using wording provided by the Surrey Hills AONB Board in their Regulation 16 Consultation response.
- Due to the duplication of policy requirements between policy H3 *Sustainable Development outside the Settlement Boundaries or on designated land* and Local Plan part 1 policies CC1 and CC2, only items vi and viii have been retained.

¹ <https://waverley.inconsult.uk/HaslemereNP/listRepresentations>

² <https://www.waverley.gov.uk/Portals/0/Documents/services/planning-and-building/planning-strategies-and-policies/neighbourhood-planning/Haslemere%20Neighbourhood%20Development%20Plan%20-%20Examination%20Arrangements.pdf?ver=QR26gZ9S8UdGnRIZsGcsFQ%3d%3d>

³ https://www.waverley.gov.uk/Portals/0/Documents/services/planning-and-building/planning-strategies-and-policies/neighbourhood-planning/Haslemere%20Neighbourhood%20Plan%20Examiner's%20clarification%20note.pdf?ver=M53m0el5txW4_d8VqnXqEg%3d%3d

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- Policy H7.2 relating to meeting the Nationally Described Space Standards, has been worded more positively because the Examiner noted that “the policy reads in a way which pre-supposes that developments will not meet the standards expected.”
- For policy H10.1 about water infrastructure the Examiner noted that “This policy reads as a process matter rather than as a policy.” The proposed revised wording is:

H10.1 Adequate water and sewage capacity should be available to support new developments. Planning applications for major development should include evidence that ~~Developers should ensure they~~ have formulated a plan with the relevant contact the water/waste water company at the earliest opportunity to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to ensure assist in identifying any potential water and waste water network infrastructure reinforcement requirements are met. Where there is a capacity constraint, phasing conditions will be applied to any planning approval to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered before the occupation of the relevant phase of development.

The Examiner has requested responses to his questions by 12th May and we expect to meet that deadline.

The next steps for the Working Party will involve responding to the Examiner’s fact check report before the Examination Report is issued. Generally, Examination Reports contain recommended modifications to a Neighbourhood Plan that the Examiner deems are required in order for the Plan to meet all of the necessary legal requirements. At this stage, the Town Council and Waverley Borough Council will determine whether they wish to include the modifications and proceed to referendum.