

## **NOTE**

### **1. Silchester Neighbourhood Plan - Examination**

The Borough Council has requested information on the examination process. In particular, First, I am asked to confirm the commencement date for the examination of the Silchester Neighbourhood Plan (Neighbourhood Plan). Secondly, the Borough Council has requested me to set out the process I intend to follow in terms of the communication with the Borough Council and the Parish Council.

This note sets out how I intend the examination process to be completed in accordance with the NPIER's guidance for service users and examiners.

### **2. Commencement of the Examination**

The examination of a Neighbourhood Plan formally commences once the Inspector has been appointed and received the draft Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying documents.

The Borough Council has provided me with hard copies of the Silchester Neighbourhood Plan; the Basic Condition Statement; the Consultation Statement and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Report. The Borough Council has also provided me with web links to the evidence-base referred to in the Neighbourhood Plan and relevant documents associated with the adopted Basingstoke Local Plan and the Local Plan update. At this initial stage of the Examination process, I have access to the necessary and relevant documents which I will take into account in reaching my recommendations on the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Borough Council has confirmed that the Site Assessment Report and the Silchester Valued Landscape Report were not provided with the Neighbourhood Plan Submission Documents. As such, these documents were not the subject of consultation during the recent Regulation 16 Consultation.

I can confirm that the Examination on the Silchester Neighbourhood Plan has now commenced.

### **3. Principal Contact with Borough Council**

My principal contact at the Local Planning Authority is Victoria Corrigan, Senior Planning Policy Officer at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. I will liaise directly with Victoria in the first instance.

#### **4. High-Level Assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan**

I am required to undertake an initial high-level assessment of the Plan documents to identify whether there are any potentially fatal flaws.

I wrote to the Borough Council on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025 in which I made the following requests:

(1) Could you please let me know if there has been a full and focused Regulation 14 Consultation by the Parish Council with the residents of Silchester? I am aware that the village magazine was delivered three weeks after the start of the Regulation 14 Consultation. The parish Council website simply stated that the Consultation started on the 6<sup>th</sup> November.

(2) In the response dated 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025 the Borough Council has referred me to the following documents – the Parish Council’s Consultation Statement April 2025; the Silchester Neighbourhood Plan Comment Compliance Check letter; the Silchester Neighbourhood Plan Compliance Check List and the Borough Council’s advice note for Neighbourhood Plans which includes advice on community engagement. I will consider these documents in full. If there are any issues of arising, I will raise this directly with the Borough and Parish Councils.

#### **5. Response by the Parish Council to Regulation 16 representations**

The Parish Council will normally be given the opportunity to comment on the representations made by other parties at the Regulation 16 stage. The NPIER’s guidance suggest comments should be made by the Parish Council within two weeks of the close of the Regulation 16 stage. However, I would be pleased to receive any response by the Parish Council to the Regulation 16 representations by 25<sup>th</sup> July 2025

#### **6. Visit to the Neighbourhood Area**

I am required to visit the relevant neighbourhood area. The site visit will help me understand the nature of the plan area and give me a better appreciation of representations. It will also help me understand whether there are any issues that need further clarification and decide whether a hearing is necessary.

It is in my intention to visit the neighbourhood area in the week beginning 4<sup>th</sup> August 2025. The visit will be unaccompanied. I will not meet with representatives of the Parish Council, the Borough Council or any of the parties who have commented on the plan.

#### **7. Clarification Note**

If required, I will send a clarification note to the Borough Council shortly after the site visit. The questions will focus on issues that will assist me to address whether the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions, and help me to understand the intention of a policy or the background evidence. The responses to these questions will help me recommend any necessary modifications to the plan to ensure it means the basic conditions.

The note will set out a time scale for the responses, but I will be guided by the Borough Council and the Parish Council on the time required to respond appropriately.

#### **8. Examination Hearing**

Following the receipt of the response to any response to the Clarification Note, I will come to view on whether a hearing is necessary as part of the examination process. In most cases I anticipate that the Neighbourhood Plan examination can proceed by written representations.

#### **9. The Examination Report**

Depending upon the initial review, the site visit and the timescales required to answer any clarification questions, I intend to send a fact check report to the Borough Council no earlier than the week beginning 18<sup>th</sup> August 2025. The exact timing would of course reflect the complexity of the plan; the scope of the issues raised in the clarification note and the time scale needed to enable responses by the Parish and Borough Council.

I recommend that the Borough Council publish this note on the Borough Council's website.

**EDWARD COUSINS**

Ratcliffe Chambers

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12<sup>th</sup> July 2025