

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE STEWKLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Examiner: Andrew S Freeman BSc (Hons) DipTP DipEM FRTPI

Examination Ref: 01/ASF/SNP

Gill Morgan
Stewkley Parish Council

David Walker
Buckinghamshire Council

Via email

3 June 2021

Dear Ms Morgan and Mr Walker

Stewkley Neighbourhood Plan Examination

Following the submission for examination of the Stewkley Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan), I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters. I also have a number of preliminary questions for both Buckinghamshire Council and Stewkley Parish Council.

Examination Documentation

I can confirm that I am satisfied that I have received a complete submission of the Plan and accompanying documentation, including the Basic Conditions Statement, the Consultation Statement, the Pre-Submission Sustainability Statement and the Regulation 16 representations, to enable me to undertake the examination.

Subject to my detailed assessment of the Plan, I have not at this initial stage identified any very significant and obvious flaws in the Plan that might lead me to advise that the examination should not proceed.

Site Visit

I intend to undertake a site visit to the neighbourhood plan area during the week commencing 7 June 2021 subject to the prevailing Government COVID-19 advice at that time. This will assist in my assessment of the 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 (and further respecting the current COVID-19 distancing arrangements).

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

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.

Further Clarification

I have a number of initial 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 within **2 weeks** of the date of this letter.

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 4-6 weeks of submission of the Plan.

As I have raised a number of questions, I must provide you with sufficient opportunity to reply. Consequentially, the examination timetable will be extended. Please be assured that I will endeavour 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 a copy of this letter and any respective responses are placed on the Parish Council and Local Authority websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Your sincerely

Andrew Freeman

Examiner

Annex

From my initial reading of the Stewkley Neighbourhood Plan and the supporting evidence, I have a number of questions for Buckinghamshire Council and Stewkley Parish Council. I have requested the submission of a response within **2 weeks** of the date of this letter.

Questions for Buckinghamshire Council

1. Please provide a copy of or link to the original Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening opinion (Aylesbury Vale District Council).
2. Does Buckinghamshire Council have any comments to make on the submission draft Neighbourhood Plan?
3. Policy STK9, Policies Map and Insets 1 and 2: Is the Council satisfied that, for development management purposes, the Local Green Spaces are adequately defined and identified?
4. Policy STK10, Policies Map and Insets 1 and 2: Is the Council satisfied that, for development management purposes, the Local Amenity Land is adequately defined and identified?

Questions for Stewkley Parish Council

5. Please comment on the representations of Village Foundations.
6. SEA/Habitats Regulations Assessment: Please provide a link to or copy of the consultation response from Natural England.
7. Policy STK2 – “schemes of 5 or fewer dwellings only may have 4 bedrooms”: Is it the intention to preclude any larger dwellings (for example, with 5 bedrooms)?
8. Policy STK9 (Local Green Spaces): Can you provide or point to a systematic assessment of *all* the proposed Local Green Spaces against the three criteria set out in Paragraph 100 of the NPPF (including all Heritage Spaces and Chapel Square)?
9. Have all owners of the proposed Local Green Spaces been notified with regard to the proposed designation? Which owners, if any, have not been notified? Have any owners objected to the proposed designation? Please provide details.