

Copdock & Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan

Post-Examination Decision Statement



Dated: 28 March 2025

Regulation 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

Summary

Regulation 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires the relevant local planning authority to decide what action to take in response each recommendation made by the Independent Examiner and to publish its decision. This statement fulfills that purpose.

The submission draft Copdock & Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan 2023 - 2037 has been independently examined by Ann Skippers BSc (Hons) MRTPI FRSA FHEA AoU. Her final report was issued on 17 March 2025. It notes that this Plan is clear in its intent and that it takes a thoughtful approach to the future of its communities. It also explains that some modifications are necessary. These include bringing text up to date where it refers to the 'emerging Joint Local Plan,' an additional supporting paragraph to Policy C&W 3 Housing Mix, and miscellaneous amendments within Chapter 8 Natural Environment. The report concludes by saying that subject to all of the modifications being made, this Plan meets the basic conditions and other statutory requirements against which it was examined, and that it should proceed to a local referendum.

Having considered the examination report, it is the District Councils recommendation that:

'Copdock & Washbrook Parish Council should make all the necessary modifications to their Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the recommendations set out in Independent Examiner's Report dated 17 March 2025 and that, subject to the satisfactory completion of that task (to be signed-off by the Head of Strategic Planning), this Plan will then be advanced to a local referendum covering the parish of Copdock & Washbrook.'

Background

The Copdock & Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the relevant regulations. The key stages are set out below:

- In September 2018, designation of the whole parish as a Neighbourhood Plan Area, which enabled the Parish Council (the 'qualifying body') to prepare its Plan
- Publication by the Parish Council of a new Regulation 14 pre-submission draft Plan for consultation between 11 March and 28 April 2023



- In April 2024, submission of the new draft Plan to Babergh District Council, which was then made available for public consultation between 7 May and 21 June 2024
- Commencing in July 2024, then resuming in early 2025 after an agreed pause, independent examination of the Plan. The final Examination Report was issued on 17 March 2025

The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). In order to satisfy them a Plan must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State,
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development,
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Development Plan for the area of the authority, *and*
- not breach and be otherwise compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.

Regulation 32 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) also prescribes the following basic condition:

- The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017(7).

The new pre-submission draft Copdock & Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan was subject to independent screening. This concluded that an Appropriate Assessment was not required. After consulting the relevant statutory bodies on the screening outcome, the Council issued its formal Determination Notice in July 2023.

Decision

The Copdock & Washbrook Neighbourhood Plan 2023 – 2037 as amended to incorporate all of the modifications set out in the Independent Examiners Report dated 17 March 2025 complies with the Basic Conditions set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and should proceed to a local referendum.

The date of the referendum will be announced separately.

A 'Referendum Version' of this neighbourhood plan, i.e., the version incorporating all the required modifications, will be published either on the day that the referendum is announced, or sooner if it is practical to do so.

References:

1. Independent Examiners Report on the Copdock & Washbrook NP:
<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/copwash-np-exam-report-2025>
2. Copdock & Washbrook NP Examination Correspondence document:
<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/copwash-np-exam-correspondence-jan-25->