

Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan 2022 - 2037

Independent Examination correspondence document

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Introduction

This document provides a record of correspondence between the Examiner (Janet Cheesley), the Parish Council (the Qualifying Body or 'QB'), and Babergh District Council during the examination of the Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan.

As required, specific documents will also continue to be published on our Hitcham NP webpage:

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/hitcham-neighbourhood-plan>

Copies of e-mails / letters etc. appearing on the following pages:

- 1. 12 May 2025: E from Examiner. Examination start and procedures**

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From: Janet Cheesley
To:
Dated: 12 May 2025
Subject: Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan Examination
Attached: [NPIERS Planning Guidance To Service Users And Examiners Rics.pdf](#)

I am writing to set out how I intend to undertake the examination of the Hitcham Neighbourhood Plan. My role is to determine whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I intend to ensure that the Parish Council feels part of the process. As such, I will copy the Parish Council into all correspondence, apart from contractual matters that are dealt with directly with the local planning authority. Likewise, please can you ensure that any correspondence from you is copied to the other party. This will ensure fairness and transparency throughout the process.

Paul will be my main point of contact. Once I have read all the papers, I may ask for any missing documents or seek clarification on some matters. It may be appropriate for me to seek clarification on matters from the Parish Council. I must emphasise very strongly that this does not mean that I will accept new evidence. In the interest of fairness to other parties, I cannot accept new evidence other than in exceptional circumstances. If the Parish Council is unsure as to whether information it is submitting may constitute new evidence, may I suggest that you send it to Paul in the first instance for an opinion.

It may be that there is very little correspondence from me during the examination. I will endeavour to keep you all up to date on the progress of the examination. The default is for an examination to be conducted without a hearing. If I feel one is necessary, I will inform you both as early as possible, but this is likely to be near the end of the examination process. If I do intend to hold a hearing, I will inform you of the procedure at that time.

I will issue a draft report for fact checking by both parties. I will ask you both to check my report for factual errors such as dates, sequence of events, names and so on that might need to be corrected. The report will be confidential and must not be presented to a public meeting. I must emphasise that this is not an opportunity to make comments on the report other than those that relate to factual errors. In particular, I will not be inviting, and will not accept, comment on any suggested modifications. The draft report will only be published as the final version if there are no factual errors found and if there is no other reason, such as a sudden change in national policy, that could be significant to my recommendations. I will endeavour to issue my final report shortly after the fact checking stage.

I understand that Paul has given the Parish Council the opportunity to make comments on the Regulation 16 representations. The Parish Council is not obliged to make comment, but it would be helpful if the Parish Council could comment on the Policies Map and Settlement Boundary alterations mentioned in the representations from Suffolk County Council and Babergh District Council.

I enclose the NPIERS Guidance to Service Users and Examiners, which may be of interest regarding the examination process.

I confirm that I have received the documents from Babergh District Council.

Regards, Janet Cheesley