

# **Whatfield Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2037**

## **Record of Independent Examination Correspondence**

First published: 29 March 2021

Last updated: 8 April 2021

### **Introduction**

This document will provide an on-going record of all 'general' correspondence during the Whatfield Neighbourhood Plan examination period between the Examiner (Janet Cheesley), the Parish Council / NP Working Group, and Babergh District Council. It will also act as a record of matters raised and responses to these.

As required, specific documents will continue to be published on the district councils Whatfield NP webpage: [www.babergh.gov.uk/WhatfieldNP](http://www.babergh.gov.uk/WhatfieldNP)

### **Copies of e-mails / letters appearing on the following pages:**

- 1. 26 March 2021 - E from Examiner: Confirmation of Start, Procedures, etc., and response dated 29 March 2021 with e-link to Landscape Guidance document.**
- 2. 29 March 2021 - E from Examiner: Affordable housing policy requirements question and response dated 8 April 2021 (including an update on status of the emerging Joint Local Plan).**

## 1. E-mail from Examiner - Confirmation of Start, Procedures and Questions.

**Dated:** 26 March 2021  
**From:** Janet Cheesley  
**To:** Paul Bryant (BMSDC), Charlotte Curtis (Steering Group Member and Parish Cllr), Andrea Long (Whatfield NP Consultant)  
**Subject:** Whatfield Neighbourhood Plan  
**Attach:** [NPIERS Guidance to Service Users and Examiners 030418.pdf](#)

I am writing to set out how I intend to undertake the examination of the Whatfield 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 direct 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 her opinion.

It may be that there is very little correspondence from me during the examination. I will endeavour to keep you both 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 the examination process. If I do intend to hold a hearing, I will inform you of the procedure at that time.

I will be visiting the Parish during the examination. I will not need to be accompanied during my visit. If I am 'spotted', I would appreciate it if I were not approached.

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 enclose the NPIERS Guidance to Service Users and Examiners, which may be of interest regarding the examination process. [\[MSDC note: See weblink provided at top of this page\]](#)

I confirm that I have received the documents from Babergh District Council, including the Regulation 16 representations. I understand that Paul has given the Parish Council the opportunity to comment on these representations. I must emphasise that the Parish Council is not obliged to make comment and I am not inviting new evidence. I will take any comments into consideration when I receive them, which I understand will be by 31 March.

Please can this email be placed on the District Council's web site. If there is future correspondence regarding matters of clarification, I will ask for those to be similarly made available.

If this has not already happened, please can it be mentioned on the District Council's web site that I have started the examination.

Please can Paul provide an electronic link to the Joint Landscape Guidance 2015, mentioned in paragraph 6.1 of the neighbourhood plan. [MSDC note: See below]

Regards,

Janet Cheesley

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**Dated:** 29 March 2021  
**From:** Paul Bryant (BMSDC),  
**To:** Janet Cheesley  
**Cc:** Charlotte Curtis, Andrea Long

Dear Janet, (All)

Thank you for e-mail dated 26 March confirming the start of this Examination. We will keep our [Whatfield NP](#) webpage updated as requested.

You ask for an e-link to the Joint Landscape Guidance 2015 mentioned in paragraph 6.1 of the neighbourhood plan and I provide this below. You will see that Whatfield is specifically mentioned on page 25 and 35 (PDF pages 26 and 36).

Link:

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/Joint-Landscape-Guidance-Aug-2015.pdf>

Kind regards

Paul Bryant  
N'hood Planning Officer | BMSDC

[Ends]

**2. E-mail from Examiner re affordable housing policy requirements, and response dated 8 April 2021.**

**Dated:** 29 March 2021  
**From:** Janet Cheesley  
**To:** Paul Bryant (BMSDC), Charlotte Curtis (Steering Group Member and Parish Cllr),  
Andrea Long (Whatfield NP Consultant)  
**Subject:** Whatfield Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Paul

Please can you confirm whether Babergh District Council has published any affordable housing policy requirements following Core Strategy Policy CS19. I am referring to the thresholds in NPPF paragraph 63. In addition, please can you confirm whether or not the Parish lies within a designated rural area under the Housing Act 1985. I am asking these questions with regard to affordable housing provision thresholds.

Regards,

Janet Cheesley

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**Dated:** 8 April 2021  
**From:** Paul Bryant (BMSDC),  
**To:** Janet Cheesley  
**Cc:** Charlotte Curtis, Andrea Long

Dear Janet, (All)

Your e-mail of 29 March refers.

Beyond Core Strategy policy CS19 and the accompanying [Affordable Housing SPD \(Feb 2014\)](#), no further guidance has been published by the council. We also confirm that Whatfield does not fall within a designated rural area as specified under the Housing Act 1985.

In addition to the above, this is an opportune moment to bring you up to date on other matters and we can now confirm that the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan was formally submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for independent Examination on 31 March 2021. Further details can be found on our submission webpage:

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/new-joint-local-plan/joint-local-plan-submission/>

Kind regards

Paul Bryant  
N'hood Planning Officer | BMSDC

[Ends]