

# **Wherstead Neighbourhood Plan 2018 - 2037**

## **Independent Examination correspondence document**

**First published: 2 February 2023**

**Last updated: 2 February 2023**

### **Introduction**

This document provides a record of all general correspondence between the Examiner (Ann Skippers), the Parish Council (the Qualifying Body or 'QB'), and Babergh District Council during the examination of the Wherstead Neighbourhood Plan. It will also act as a record of matters raised and responses to these.

As required, specific documents will also be published on our Wherstead NP webpage: [www.babergh.gov.uk/WhersteadNP](http://www.babergh.gov.uk/WhersteadNP)

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

- 1. E from Examiner dated 31 Jan 2023: Examination start and procedures.**

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**Dated:** 31 January 2023  
**From:** Ann Skippers  
**To:** Paul Bryant (BMSDC), Ian Poole (Wherstead NP Consultant)  
**cc:** Robin Coates, David Baldry & Samantha Barber (Wherstead Parish Council)  
**Subject:** Commencement of the Examination into the Wherstead NDP  
**Attach:** Examination Note

Dear Paul, Ian, All,

I am writing to confirm to you and the Parish Council that the examination of the above NDP has now started.

I attach the usual examination note which sets out what I trust is useful general information about the procedures for examinations. [\[BDC Note: this is reproduced below\]](#)

If you or the Parish Council have any queries please do not hesitate to get in touch.

I hope to be able to update you about progress very soon, but at the present time I hope to have any queries of clarification or the fact check report (if no queries arise) with you by the end of the month of February at the very latest.

Thank you for appointing me to undertake this one; I look forward to working on the Plan and visiting the area.

Kind regards  
Ann Skippers

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**Wherstead Neighbourhood Plan Examination**

**Examination Note 1**

**Information Note from the Independent Examiner to the LPA and Qualifying Body**

Further to my appointment to undertake the independent examination of the above Neighbourhood Plan, this note aims to set out how I intend to conduct the examination. My role is to determine whether the Plan meets the basic conditions and other legal requirements.

***1. Communication***

It is important that the examination process is open and transparent to all interested parties. I hope to ensure that the Parish Council feels part of the process. My main point of contact will be the designated local planning authority contact, Paul Bryant.

Any correspondence (other than that relating to contractual matters) should be published on the local planning authority's website and the Parish Council's website in a timely manner.

If anyone else who is not the designated point of contact gets in touch with me direct, for example a local resident or planning consultant, I will refer them to the local planning authority contact in the first instance for assistance.

## ***2. Examination documents***

I will access most documents electronically either from the local planning authority's website or on the Parish Council website or any dedicated Neighbourhood Plan website. If I have any trouble finding or accessing any documents, I will let you know so that these can be provided to me.

It would be also helpful, if not already done, if the local planning authority could confirm the adopted development plan and any saved policies. In addition if there are any emerging development plans, details of the stages reached and future programmes would be appreciated. In both cases, please direct me to relevant parts of your website or let me know how I can access the documents that you identify.

## ***3. Late representations***

As a general rule of thumb late or additional representations will not be accepted. The only time when I will consider accepting a representation submitted after the consultation period has ended is in those cases where there has been a material change in circumstances since the six week consultation period has ended. For example national planning policy changes or a judgement may be handed down from the Courts. In these circumstances anyone wishing to introduce new evidence should fully justify why and in the case of substantial documents, indicate which parts of the document are relevant and why.

However, if a meeting or hearing is held, there may be further opportunities for comments to be made at my request to assist me in ensuring adequate examination of an issue.

## ***4. Clarification procedures***

I may at any time during the examination seek written clarification of any matters that I consider necessary. This is quite common and should not be regarded as anything out of the ordinary. The usual time for response to any clarification queries is one to two weeks.

I must emphasise that this does not mean I will accept new evidence. In the interests of fairness to other parties, I cannot accept any 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 it is sent to the local planning authority contact in the first instance for their advice on this point.

If I find that there are significant issues which may prevent the Plan meeting the basic conditions I will let you know during the course of the examination as soon as I can so that options on how best to proceed can be considered. Whilst this situation can usually be dealt with through an exchange of written correspondence, if it would be helpful to hold a meeting, I will suggest this and be in touch

to make suitable arrangements. Any such meeting will be held in public and at the present time, be held virtually.

Any request for clarification and any response should be published on the relevant Council websites.

### ***5. Visit to the Plan area***

I expect to be visiting the Plan area during the examination. Visits, where necessary, help me to understand the nature of the Plan and the representations. It will also help me decide if there are any issues to be clarified. I will not need to be accompanied on any visit. If however, I feel it is essential to gain access onto private land then I will be in touch to seek permission to do that and at that point an accompanied site visit may need to be arranged.

If I am 'spotted' during my visit, I would appreciate it if I am not approached, but allowed to continue the visit unheeded.

### ***6. Examination timetable***

The main determinants of how long the examination will take are firstly the number and complexity of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, the clarity of supporting documentation and evidence and the number and nature of any representations.

It may be there is very little correspondence from me during the examination. I will however endeavour to keep you updated on the progress of the examination. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to know progress and have not heard from me.

### ***7. The need for a hearing***

At the present time, I do not envisage there will be a need for a hearing. However, at any time before final report is issued, I may decide to call a hearing if I consider this is necessary to ensure adequate examination of any issue or to allow a person a fair chance to put a case.

If a hearing is necessary, I will let you know as soon as I can and be in touch to discuss the procedure and to make suitable arrangements at that time.

The period of notice for hearings is not prescribed, but typically 21 days notice is given.

### ***8. The 'Fact Check' stage***

A confidential draft of my report will be sent to the Parish Council and local planning authority to allow both parties to check whether there are any factual errors such as dates, sequence of events, names and so on. This is not an opportunity for further representations to be made. A period of a week or so is usually set aside for this purpose.

I find it very helpful if the local planning authority collates its own comments with those of the Parish Council into a single response or both separate responses are sent to me at the same time.

I will endeavour to issue my final report shortly after the fact check stage.

**9. Procedural questions**

I hope this information is helpful. If the Parish Council or local planning authority have any questions relating to the examination process at this stage, please do not hesitate to get in touch and I will do my best to answer any such queries.

Ann Skippers MRTPI  
Independent examiner  
31 January 2023

[Ends]