

Barningham Neighbourhood Plan

Parish Council response to Examiner's Clarification Note

April 2026

The Neighbourhood Plan Examiner published a Clarification Note on 15 April 2026. This paper provides the Parish Council's response to the questions raised in the Note.

Planning Policies

Policy BARN 3 - Protecting Barningham's Landscape Character

The Examiner asks "if there a degree of tension between the identification of important views 10 and 11 and the development of the housing allocation to the south of Hopton Road (AP43) as included in the recently adopted Local Plan? If so, how can this tension be resolved?"

Parish Council response:

Policy Barn 3 requires "that development proposals must demonstrate how they.....will ensure that there is no unacceptable impact on the key features of the important views identified on the Policies Map."

Views 10 and 11 are outward views into the open countryside from Lingwood Close and Hopton Road respectively. The submitted evidence document "Assessment of Key Views" notes the key features and sensitivities of the views.

For View 10 it notes "Development proposals in this area should give careful consideration as to how existing views to the open countryside can be retained."

For View 11 it notes: "Development proposals in this area should give careful consideration as to how existing views to the open countryside as well as the existing tree screening can be retained."

As such, the assessment recognises that the area could be the subject of development proposals and provides a consideration for when development proposals in the Local Plan allocation are being designed. The Parish Council is of the opinion that the wording in both the policy and the supporting Assessment of Views is appropriate. Proposals could seek to retain a view out to the open countryside through development design considerations, such as designing the access road from Hopton Road to retain a view through the development to the open countryside (View 11) and careful consideration of the placement of open space in the development could retain the key features of View 10 from Lingwood Close out to the countryside.

Representations

The Examiner asks for the Parish Council's comments on the representations received at the Regulation 16 consultation stage and, in particular, comments by the District and County Council.

Parish Council's response to representations

The table below sets out the Parish Council's response to all the representations received at the Regulation 16 consultation stage.

Representation	Parish Council response
National Gas National Gas do not raise any specific matters relating to the Neighbourhood Plan	National Gas were consulted at the pre-submission consultation stage but did not comment. Nothing further to add.
W H Wallace and Son A number of matters are raised as summarised below: The Plan-Making Policies of the emerging National Planning Policy Framework has not been demonstrably adhered to. The utilisation of small and medium sized sites in meeting housing needs seems to have been excluded from the Neighbourhood Plan. The proposed Neighbourhood Plan demonstrates a very low level of conformity to the Basic Condition of sustainable development. There is a lack of confidence that the proposed level of housing delivery would contribute to maintaining and improving many of the services and facilities within the village. The current, tightly defined Housing Settlement Boundary does not allow for the provision of housing that would ensure Barningham's key services could be sustained within the current lifetime of the Local Plan period, notwithstanding the requirements which will be needed for a sustainable and active lifestyle for future generations. Suggests that sites north (Reference NP2 in the Barningham Neighbourhood Plan Site Options Assessment 2019) and south of Hopton Road, adjacent to the Housing Settlement Boundary, have good prospects for development given the existing highways infrastructure and low impact on	W H Wallace and Son did not comment at the pre-submission consultation stage. The draft National Planning Policy Framework have no status at this time, having been subject to public consultation early in 2026. There is no requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan to allocate d=further sites to meet the requirements of Local Plan strategic policy SP15 – Neighbourhood plans. The Parish Council is satisfied that the Plan provides for sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF (December 2024) and as demonstrated in the Basic Conditions Statement. The level of growth is identified in the recently adopted West Suffolk Local Plan, where the spatial distribution of growth has been tested by Government Planning Inspectors. They did not suggest that greater levels of growth were required in Barningham/ The Housing Settlement Boundary is defined in the recently adopted Local Plan. There is no requirement to identify these sites to satisfy Policy SP15 of the Local Plan. The Site Options Assessment identified that the site north of Hopton Road could accommodate 180 dwellings, which would be a level of growth contrary to the strategic policies of the Local Plan. Given the plateau landscape within

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environmental, heritage and landscape designations. Given these considerations, and the continued natural growth of the village, it is suggested that these sites could comfortably nestle themselves into the existing fabric of the village.	which the suggested sites sit, it is considered that they would far from “nestle” into the fabric of the village but, rather, have a significant detrimental impact on the landscape setting of the village.
Wain Estates Wain Estates recommend that Neighbourhood Plan is modified to reflect a realistic capacity of site at Hopton Road – of 60 homes – reflecting the work undertaken to underpin the pending planning application and the need to make efficient use of land.	Wain Estates submitted comments at the pre-submission consultation stage The planning application for 60 homes referred to by Wain Estates has recently been refused by West Suffolk Council. The reason for refusal states “The proposal for up to 60 dwellings represents a substantial uplift above the Local Plan allocation and relies on land outside the allocation, within the blue line, for SANG and BNG” and “The scale and density proposed exceed the planned growth capacity for Barningham, resulting in a form of development that would be out of character with the settlement and contrary to Policies AP42, SP4 and SP12 of the West Suffolk Local Plan.” As such, there is no evidence to support a modification of the Plan as suggested.
Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) SWT comment on a number of policies, summarised below: Policy BARN 4 – Biodiversity and Habitats SWT query the wording of the final part of the policy concerning “restoring and repairing fragmented wildlife networks, for example, including swift-boxes, bat boxes and holes in fences which allow access for hedgehogs”. They point out that these measures do not contribute to biodiversity net gain and that providing swift or bat boxes does not restore a fragmented biodiversity network.	Suffolk Wildlife Trust were consulted but did not respond at the pre-submission consultation stage. The Parish Council would support amendments to the Policy to clarify the requirements. The referendum version of the recently examined West Row Neighbourhood Plan has a very similar policy that separates the provision of matters such as swift boxes away from the elements of the policy encouraging measurable net gain. The Parish Council considers that such an approach would be appropriate for BARN 4. The Examiner might like to consider whether the following approach would provide clarity: Proposals will be supported where they integrate improvements to biodiversity which will secure a measurable net gain as part of the design through, for example,

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Policy BARN 5 – Local Green Spaces SWT support the identification of green spaces, in particular Aggies Piece County Wildlife Site. Policy BARN 7 – Development Design Considerations SWT supports the policy Policy BARN 9 – Flooding and Sustainable Drainage SWT supports this policy Policy BARN 10 – Dark Skies SWT supports this policy Policy BARN 12 – Public Rights of Way SWT supports the ambition to incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity within an improved or extended public right of way network.	a) the creation of new natural habitats including ponds; b) the planting of additional native trees and hedgerows (reflecting the character of West Row’s traditional trees and hedgerows) ; and c) restoring and repairing fragmented wildlife networks and creating new links between them. In addition to the statutory requirements, development will be supported where it incorporates provision within dwellings for measures including swift bricks, bat boxes and holes in fences which allow access for hedgehogs. The Parish Council has nothing further to add in relation to the comments on other policies.
Historic England Historic England do not consider it necessary to provide further comments at this time.	Historic England submitted comments at the pre-submission consultation stage. Nothing further to add.
West Suffolk Council “Housing Solutions	West Suffolk Council were consulted at pre-submission consultation stage. The “Housing Solutions” service did not provide separate comments to the wider Council comments at that stage.

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The respondents refer to the draft NPPF which was published for consultation in December 2025 and they considered it would be adopted before the neighbourhood Plan was made. The respondent refers to instances where the Plan refers to the 'draft' Local Plan. Policy BARN 13 – Parking Standards The respondents state that the adopted Suffolk Guidance for Parking should be followed rather than the higher standards in the Neighbourhood Plan.	The Neighbourhood Plan is being examined against the 2024 NPPF. Instances referring to the 'Draft' Local Plan can be amended prior to the Plan going to Referendum. Neighbourhood Plans have the ability to amend the parking guidance should there be local evidence to support such a policy.
David Barton, Community Campaigner The submission states that it is a "universal consultation therefore acts as an official Representation at all and any stage of official area UK Planning Consultations" It contains nothing specific to the Barningham Neighbourhood Plan.	David Barton, Community Campaigner did not comment at the pre-submission consultation stage. No comment.
West Suffolk Campaign for Pubs The Campaign for Pubs acknowledges the identification of and support for the Royal George public house.	The Campaign for Pubs did not comment at the pre-submission consultation stage. No comment
West Suffolk Council West Suffolk Council provide a number of comments which can generally be categorised into factual updates / corrections and more specific policy related comments. In terms of policy specific matters: Policy BARN 1: The District Council state that their response to the pre-submission consultation contained a typographical error and that the suggestion to include "minimise the loss of the best quality	West Suffolk Council commented at the pre-submission consultation stage. The factual updates and corrections can be made to the Referendum version of the Plan, in agreement with the District Council without impacting on whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions. The Parish Council acknowledges that the wording would be better placed in the last paragraph. For consistency with other neighbourhood plans in the district, the Examiner might wish to consider whether, to accommodate the District Council's

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agricultural land.” would be better placed in the last paragraph which addresses development outside the settlement boundary. Policy BARN 3: The District Council recommends moving viewpoints 10 and 11 to the south and east sides of the new settlement boundary. Barn 9: The District Council suggests some minor amendments to the wording of the policy.	suggestion, the final paragraph should be a continuation of the bullet point list as follows: “where it can be demonstrated that: i. through the submission of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, or other appropriate and proportionate evidence, the proposal can be accommodated in the countryside without having a significant detrimental impact, by reason of the building’s scale, materials and location, on the character and appearance of the countryside and diminish gaps between settlements; and ii. it will not result in the irreversible loss of the best or most versatile agricultural land.” See the Parish Council response to the Examiner’s Question above. It is believed that the suggested viewpoints may not be from publicly accessible points? The Parish Council considers that the proposed amendment would be reasonable should the Examiner consider it necessary for the policy to meet the Basic Conditions.
Paula Weeks Comments that then staggered crossroads particularly the turn into Church Road is busy, narrow and potentially dangerous for pedestrians. Any development that increased traffic through this junction should be discouraged.	Paula Weeks commented at the pre-submission consultation stage but did not raise this concern. Nothing further to add
Natural England Natural England does not have any specific comments on this draft neighbourhood plan	Natural England commented at the pre-submission consultation stage Nothing further to add
Roberta Baxter Comments that the allocation for 37 homes in Barningham should be considered a maximum and provides other supportive comments.	Roberta Baxter did not comment at the pre-submission consultation stage. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate the site for housing and cannot restrict the development to 37 houses as this would be contrary to a strategic policy of the Local Plan.