

Freckenham Neighbourhood Development Plan

Examiner's Clarification Note

This Note sets out my initial comments on the submitted Plan. It also sets out areas where it would be helpful to have some further clarification. For the avoidance of any doubt, matters of clarification are entirely normal at this early stage of the examination process.

Initial Comments

The Plan provides a clear and concise vision for the neighbourhood area. It is underpinned by a series of background documents which directly inform some of the policies. This is best practice.

The presentation of the Plan is excellent. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. In addition, the Plan makes good use of various high-quality maps and photographs.

Points for Clarification

I have read the submitted documents and the representations made to the Plan. I have also visited the neighbourhood area. I am now able to raise issues for clarification with both the Parish Council and with West Suffolk Council.

The comments made on the points in this Note will be used to assist in the preparation of the examination report and in recommending any modifications that may be necessary to the Plan to ensure that it meets the basic conditions. I set out specific policy clarification points below in the order in which they appear in the submitted Plan:

Policy FRE1

As its title suggests this policy establishes a clear spatial strategy for the neighbourhood area.

Policy FRE2

I note that the West Suffolk Local Plan was submitted for its own examination in May 2024. Is West Suffolk Council satisfied that the Local Plan has reached an appropriate stage in its preparation and examination to justify the approach taken in the neighbourhood plan (which relies on the allocation of the Fordham Road site in the Local Plan)?

Policy FRE3

Is the second part of the policy necessary as the provision of broadband into new buildings is now controlled by the Building Regulations?

Policy FRE5

This is an excellent, distinctive policy underpinned by the Landscape Assessment.

Policy FRE7

This is another excellent policy which, in this case, is underpinned by the Local Green Spaces Appraisal.

Policy FRE9

This is an important policy in the Plan. It is underpinned by the Design Guidance and the Development Design Checklist. In addition, the criteria in the policy are locally-distinctive.

In the round the approach taken is a first-class response to Section 12 of the NPPF.

Policy FRE12

The first sentence of the policy comments about a preference for dark skies. However, is a 'preference' capable of being implemented through the development management process?

Policy FRE13

Are the third and fourth parts of the policy necessary as the provision of electric vehicle charging points is now controlled by the Building Regulations?

Policy FRE14

This is an excellent policy which highlights the local importance of community facilities. The approach taken also acknowledges that the use and/or viability of the identified facilities may change in the Plan period.

Policy FRE 15

Is a 'preference' capable of being implemented through the development management process? Are there activities other than employment or community uses which would be acceptable for redundant, traditional farm buildings?

Community Aspirations

The Aspirations are very distinctive to the neighbourhood area. This is best practice.

Representations

Does the Parish Council wish to comment on any of the representations made to the Plan?

I would find it helpful if the Parish Council commented on the representations from:

- Anglian Water;
- Suffolk County Council; and
- Mr Colin Huggan.

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 28 August 2024. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It is intended to maintain the momentum of the examination.

If certain responses are available before others, I would be happy to receive the information on a piecemeal basis. Irrespective of how the information is assembled, please could it come to me directly from West Suffolk Council. In addition, please can all responses make direct reference to the policy or the matter concerned.

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Independent Examiner

Freckenham Neighbourhood Development Plan

8 August 2024