

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF MARDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EXAMINER: DEREK STEBBING B.A. (Hons), Dip. E.P., MRTPI

Ms Alison Hooker
Clerk to Marden Parish Council

Ms Anna Houghton
Maidstone Borough Council

Examination Ref: 01/DAS/MNP

12 August 2019

Dear Ms Hooker and Ms Houghton

MARDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION

Following the submission of the Marden Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) for examination, I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters.

1. Examination Documentation

I can confirm that I am satisfied that I have received a complete submission of the draft Plan and accompanying documentation, including the Basic Conditions Statement, the Consultation Statement and the Regulation 16 representations, to enable me to undertake the examination.

Subject to my detailed assessment of the draft Plan, I have not at this initial stage identified any very significant and obvious flaws in the Plan that might lead me to advise that the examination should not proceed.

2. Site Visit

I intend to undertake a site visit to the neighbourhood plan area during the week commencing 2 September 2019. This will assist in my assessment of the draft Plan, including the issues identified in the representations.

The site visit will be undertaken unaccompanied. It is very important that I am not approached to discuss any aspects of the Plan or the neighbourhood area, as this may be perceived to prejudice my independence and risk compromising the fairness of the examination process.

3. Written Representations

At this stage, I consider the examination can be conducted solely by the written representations procedure, without the need for a hearing. However, I will reserve the option to convene a hearing should a matter(s) come to light where I consider that a hearing is necessary to ensure the adequate examination of an issue, or to ensure that a person has a fair chance to put a case.

4. Examination Timetable

As you will be aware, the intention is to examine the Plan (including conduct of the site visit) with a view to providing a draft report (for 'fact checking') within 4-6 weeks of submission of the draft Plan.

In that respect, please note that I received the Regulation 16 representations on 9 August 2019. Accordingly, I would hope to complete my report (for fact checking) in the mid to latter part of September 2019. This is subject to any need that might arise to seek further clarification on matters pertaining to the Plan(and/or, as noted in 3. above, to hold a hearing).

If you or the qualifying body have any process questions related to the conduct of the examination, which you would like me to address, please do not hesitate to contact the office team in the first instance.

In the interests of transparency, may I prevail upon you to ensure a copy of this letter is placed on both the Parish Council and the Maidstone Borough Council websites?

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Your sincerely

Derek Stebbing

Examiner