

Email sent to Examiner Mr High from Ashford Borough Council – 28th July 2020
(Copied to Bethersden Parish Council)

Independent Examination of the Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan

Dear Mr High,

I write further to my last e-mail to you on the 19th February 2020 where I advised you of the Parish Council's intentions to undertake an updated Housing Needs Survey for the Parish and that I had agreed that there should be no further consultation carried out on any proposed amendments to either the Regulation 16 Bethersden Neighbourhood Plan or any of its supporting documentation until the updated Housing Needs survey has been conducted and the results analysed. I indicated then that a decision would then be taken on whether I would ask you to pursue the current Examination or not.

I am pleased to say that the new Housing Needs Survey has been undertaken and a report published for the Parish Council. This will provide up-to-date and robust evidence of the scope and scale of local housing needs over the next few years. However, it is clear to me that it would not be reasonable or, in my view, lawful, to continue with the current Examination in light of such an important and central change to the evidence base upon which the Examined Plan is based. I consider that there would be significant implications for the draft Plan which require a proper and full assessment and consultation and alongside the other deficiencies that you had previously indicated to me in your correspondence of December 2019, I have concluded that the Examination should be terminated. The Borough Council will publish this e-mail on its website and advise all relevant parties accordingly.

I have appraised the Parish Council of this position and offered the Borough Council's assistance in deciding a future course of action should they wish to pursue a Neighbourhood Plan to help the delivery of the housing needs identified in the updated survey.

I want to thank you for your time and trouble in undertaking the Examination to this point and please let me know if there are any outstanding fees due.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Cole

Spatial Planning Manager & Acting Strategic Development & Delivery Manager
Ashford Borough Council