

Planning & Development

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Mr Derek Stebbing B.A. (Hons), Dip. E.P., MRTPI
Examiner for Egerton Neighbourhood Plan
Via email

Examination Ref: 01/DAS/ENP



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Dear Mr Stebbing,

EGERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION – CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS RESPONSE FROM ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Following receipt of the letter dated 26th August, please see below responses to the questions raised by the Examiner to Ashford Borough Council.

Question 5: Policy S1 (Community Facilities, Page 43)

Can the **Borough Council** and/or the **Qualifying Body** please confirm that The George Public House and the Egerton Post Office and Stores are the only registered Assets of Community Value within the Plan area?

ABC response:

Of the two premises cited, only The Barrow House (formerly known as The George PH) is currently included in the List of Assets of Community Value.

The entry relating to Egerton Village Stores expired in April 2021. Egerton Parish Council informed ABC legal department that they would be meeting in early August 2021 to decide whether they would submit a new nomination. At the time of writing, no new nomination has been received.

No other nominations have been received from Egerton Parish Council.

Question 6 - Policy D4 (Local Needs Affordable Housing and paragraphs 7.26-7.29, Pages 59/60)



The Government has recently published details of its new 'First Homes' policy initiative. The newly published 'First Homes' section of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) now requires as follows (in particular see PPG IDs: 70-017-20210524 and 70-018-20210524: First Homes - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) :

- **Neighbourhood plans are expected to contain First Homes policies.** The guidance states that First Homes are now the Government's "preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25 per cent of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations". Policies in neighbourhood plans, like local plans, are expected to reflect this requirement.
- **Transitional arrangements apply to draft plans already being prepared.** Neighbourhood plans submitted for examination before 28 June 2021, or those that have reached publication stage by the same date and are subsequently submitted for examination by 28 December 2021, are not required to contain First Homes policies.

The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan is covered by the transitional arrangements summarised above.

Nevertheless, I consider that the Plan would benefit from a reference to the provision of First Homes (at a level of at least 25% of all affordable housing to be provided), possibly as an additional paragraph of text.

I invite both the **Borough Council** and the **Qualifying Body** to consider this matter, and if appropriate to provide draft text to address this point.

ABC response:

The Borough Council are aware of the Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) of May 2021 relating to the delivery of 'First Homes'. The Council advise that adopted Local Plan Policy HOU1 (Affordable Housing) requires an overall percent of Affordable housing to be delivered on sites (according to the location of the site within the borough). Proposals coming forward in the area covered by the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan would be expected to deliver 40% affordable housing overall. Policy HOU1 also assumed that an element of 'Affordable home ownership products' could be provided including 'Starter Homes' which are similar to the First Homes in that they are both discounted market housing. This existing policy approach was viability tested and assessed at Examination where it was deemed to be deliverable and accepted as 'sound' by an Inspector.

At this point, the Council are discussing how First Homes might be delivered in the Borough in light of the WMS and given the fact we have a recently adopted Local Plan that already provides an up to date policy framework for affordable housing delivery. In line with the WMS, the Council intends to publish a 'Position Statement' in due course which addresses the 'First Homes' initiative and provides clarity with regard to how the matter could be dealt with. If it is possible for the Council to publish its position during the examination period of the Egerton NP, then the Council will endeavour to achieve this and then will share this with the Examiner as soon as reasonably possible.



Question 9 - National Planning Policy Framework July 2021

A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework was published by the government on 20 July 2021, alongside a final version of the National Model Design Code. Can the **Borough Council** and the **Qualifying Body** please advise me whether you consider any modifications in relation to the non-strategic matters covered by the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2040 are necessary as a result of the publications and, if so, what these are?

ABC response:

The Neighbourhood Plan currently contains a number of references to the NPPF 2019. It is our view that the following paragraphs/sections require amendments, to be drafted by the Qualifying body.

- References to date of NPPF and/or paragraph numbers within the NP which require amendment - Paragraphs 1.4, 5.24, 6.1, 7.1, 7.38 and Policy D4.
- Paragraphs 7.3, 7.4, 7.10 and 7.38 – details relating to design. These could be updated to reflect the current NPPF on design and ‘building beautiful’ and new National Design Code terminology. In addition – the reference to ‘innovative’ may require review (within Policy D1 and supporting text) as this was removed from the NPPF with regards to isolated homes in the Countryside (Paragraph 80).
- Paragraphs 7.50 onwards in section on Climate Change– it may be useful to reference the united nations climate change goals referenced in paragraph 7 of the NPPF 2021.
- The wording of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11(a) of the NPPF 2021) has been amended to broaden the high-level objective for plans to make express reference to the importance of both infrastructure and climate change. This could be referenced within the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The updated NPPF introduces a new paragraph 131 stating that “planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible”. This could be referenced within supporting text and/or policy P2 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- It may also be advisable to remove any NPPF references from within policy wording itself and only include those within the supporting text, to ensure the policy wording remains current if the NPPF references are altered during the plan period.

We hope these responses are helpful. If the Examiner or Qualifying body require any clarification or further assistance, the borough council would be pleased to help.



Kind regards,

Claire Marchant

Deputy Team Leader – Plan Making and Infrastructure
Spatial Planning Team

