



Simon Cole
Head of Planning Policy
Ashford Borough Council
Civic Centre
Tannery Lane
Ashford
Kent
TN 23 1PL

cc Linda Hedley Locum Clerk, Bethersden PC

5 March 2018

Dear Mr Cole

Independent Examination of Bethersden Neighbourhood Development Plan

I am grateful for the appointment to carry out this examination and am writing to you to set out clearly how the examination process will be conducted.

It is vital that the examination process is open and transparent and I should therefore be grateful if you could copy this letter to Bethersden Parish Council and post it on the Ashford Borough Council website, excluding my contact details.

I have received hard copies of the submission documents and the regulation 16 representations on the submitted plan. I am starting the examination with a review of the documentation to identify the scope of the Plan and the main issues. I shall then make an unaccompanied site visit on 13 March to familiarise myself with the Parish and the sites referred to in the Plan. I may be seen walking around the village, but should point out that, in the interests of openness, if I am approached during my visit I will not be able to discuss the Plan.

I shall proceed initially on the basis that the examination is likely to be on the basis of written representations. When I have completed my initial review and site visit I will let you know whether I consider there is likely to be a need for a hearing. However, the option of holding a hearing if it becomes necessary will remain open throughout the examination. If I decide there is a need for a hearing I will let you know in writing, copied to the Parish Council, what issues are to be addressed. At the same time, I will let you know what form the hearing will take, who should be invited to participate and suggest some possible dates. I will ask you to arrange for a suitable venue in consultation with the Parish Council and to publicise the hearing.

During the examination, I may well seek clarification on matters that are not clear to me from the documentation provided and this will be in the form of one or more e mails to you and copied to the Parish Council. I should be grateful if the Parish Council channels any response they may have to these queries through you rather than reply to me direct. My emails and the responses to them should be posted on the Borough Council website. If I find that there are significant issues which may prevent the Plan meeting the basic conditions I will let you know during the examination.

I anticipate that the examination will take approximately 7 working days in total, spread over a period of 4-5 weeks. If the total time will exceed 7 days I will let you know with an estimate of what the total time taken will be.

When I have completed my draft report I will send it to you, copied to the Parish Council to be checked for factual and typographical errors. I must emphasise that this is not an opportunity to comment, or make representations on my conclusions and the report should remain confidential at that stage in case any factual corrections lead me to alter my recommendations.

I hope that these arrangements are satisfactory to you and if you or the Parish Council have any questions on them please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Richard High

Richard High BA MA MRTPI
Independent Examiner