

Planning Help

Helping you influence decisions that shape where you live

Taxel/Ithead

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Step 7: Independent examination

An independent examiner will evaluate your plan to ensure it meets all statutory obligations.



Your local planning authority will arrange for the independent examination of your Neighbourhood Plan.

The examiner is appointed by your local planning authority but the person can only be appointed with the agreement of the body responsible for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. The arrangements for the examination will be decided by the examiner in consultation with your local planning authority and your parish or town council, or neighbourhood forum, whichever is relevant. The main purpose of the examination is to ensure that your Neighbourhood Plan:

- ▶ Meets European obligations.
- ▶ Has regard to national planning policies.
- ▶ Is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.
- ▶ Is compatible with adjoining Neighbourhood Plans.
- ▶ Contributes to the achievement of *sustainable development*.

It's likely that the examiner will wish to consider written representations (comments objecting to or supporting your Neighbourhood Plan) rather than hearing comments in person, but a public hearing may be called if the examiner feels this is required.

Top tip

If a public hearing is held and you intend to speak you may need to prepare yourself to answer questions about your Neighbourhood Plan. You may be asked about the process (how it was prepared including the role of consultation and, if relevant, Sustainability Appraisal) and the content (e.g. to provide evidence or justification for a particular policy approach).

The examiner's report

Once the examination is over, the examiner will issue a report that is likely to include one of the following recommendations:

- ▶ That your draft Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum.
- ▶ That your draft Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a referendum, subject to certain amendments.
- ▶ That your draft Neighbourhood Plan should not proceed.

If the recommendation is that the Neighbourhood Plan should not proceed to a referendum the reasons for this should be explained. The community will then need to consider whether, and if so how, they can address these concerns. If they feel the changes that would need to be made are acceptable they can look to submit the revised version for further examination in the future.

If the recommendation is that the plan should proceed to a referendum the examiner may give advice on the communities to be covered by the referendum (which could go beyond the area covered by your Neighbourhood Plan). This may be, for example, because your Neighbourhood Plan proposes a site for development near to the boundary of your neighbourhood area and so the examiner wishes to extend voting rights to residents the other side of the boundary.

Your local planning authority will consider the examiner's report, decide whether the recommendations should be followed, and will then publish its decision, notifying those who prepared and submitted the Neighbourhood Plan.

[Step 8: Referendum and Adoption](#)

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