

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE SANDON
NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

EXAMINER: Andrew S Freeman BSc (Hons) DipTP DipEM FRTPI

Ted Munt
Clerk to Sandon Parish Council

Jenny Robinson
Chelmsford City Council

Via email

Examination Ref: 01/AF/SNP

24 August 2023

Dear Mr Munt and Ms Robinson

SANDFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN EXAMINATION

Following the submission of the Sandford Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) for examination, I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters. I also have a number of questions for Sandon Parish Council (the Qualifying Body/Parish Council) to which I would like to receive a written response by **Friday 8 September 2023**, if possible.

1. Examination Documentation

I can confirm that I am satisfied I have received the draft Plan and accompanying documentation, including the Basic Conditions Statement, the Consultation Statement, the Strategic Environmental Assessment & Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report and the Regulation 16 representations, to enable me to undertake the examination.

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

2. Site Visit

I will aim to carry out a site visit to the neighbourhood plan area during the week beginning 4 September 2023. The site visit will assist in my assessment of the draft Plan, including the issues identified in the representations.

The 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.

I may have some additional questions, following my site visit, which I will set out in writing should I require any further clarification.

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. Further Clarification

From my initial assessment of the Plan and supporting documents, I have identified a number of matters where I require some additional information from the Parish Council.

I have 10 questions seeking further clarification, which I have set out in the Annex to this letter. I would be grateful if you can seek to provide a written response by **Friday 8 September 2023**.

5. 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 around 6 weeks of submission of the draft Plan. However, as I have raised a number of questions, I must provide you with sufficient opportunity to reply. Consequentially, the examination timetable may be extended. Please be assured that I will aim to mitigate any delay as far as is practicable. The IPe office team will seek to keep you updated on the anticipated delivery date of the draft report.

If you 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 that a copy of this letter is placed on the Parish Council and Chelmsford City Council websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Freeman

Examiner

ANNEX

From my initial reading of the Sandon Neighbourhood Plan, the supporting evidence and the representations that have been made to the Plan, I have the following questions for the Qualifying Body. I have requested the submission of responses **by Friday 8 September 2023**, although an earlier response would be appreciated if practicable. All of the points set out below flow from the requirement to satisfy the Basic Conditions.

1. Please confirm that the Parish Council is satisfied that the Plan does not breach Human Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).
2. Please confirm the dates of the Regulation 16 consultation period.
3. Policy SAN H1 A.ii – “Demonstrate how the proposal maintains a separate identity”: Are individual proposals meant to demonstrate a separate identity or is it a question of the village still having a separate identity once an individual proposal is built?
4. Policy SAN H1 B – proposals within the setting of Sandon – need for Visual Impact Assessment (VIA): Is the extent of the setting of Sandon defined in any way? Are *all* proposals to be accompanied by a VIA?
5. Policy SAN H2: In order to achieve a balanced mix of housing in the Parish, what size and mix of houses are being sought? Please identify the parts of the Local Plan with which consistency is being sought.
6. Policy SAN D1 B vi - City Council’s Livewell Accreditation Scheme: Is the relevant document the Chelmsford Health Wellbeing Plan 2022? Is this a voluntary scheme? If so, should assessment through the scheme be necessary in order to gain the support of the policy?
7. Policy SAN G1 A and B: Does any part of the Zone of Influence of the Crouch and Roach Estuaries Ramsar and SPA overlap the Sandon Parish boundary? If so, please provide details (map).
8. Policy SAN G1 B – Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA): Is it envisaged that all residential developments (including a single dwelling) would need project level HRA? What is contemplated under the term “or otherwise”?
9. Policy SAN G1 C: Is the intention of this part of the policy to secure a net gain in biodiversity of at least 10%; and that shall be on site (or, if not, in accordance with the provisions in the second part of Paragraph C)?
10. Policy SAN G1 E: Under what circumstances is it envisaged that developments will be required to contribute towards the delivery of new green and blue infrastructure?
11. Policy SAN G1 F: Where are details of the Wildlife Corridors (and the associated habitats and species) to be found (please provide links if appropriate)? Should development proposals be required to both preserve *and* enhance? Will this part of the policy apply to *all* development proposals?
12. Policy SAN T1 A – “the multifunctional pedestrian and cycle networks”: Where are these identified?

13. Policy SAN T1 B iv: Are there any best practice principles to which you would wish to refer other than DfT Cycle Infrastructure Design LTN 1/20?