

Docking Neighbourhood Development Plan

Examiner's Clarification Note

This Note sets out my initial comments on the submitted Plan. It also sets out areas where it would be helpful to have some further clarification. For the avoidance of any doubt, matters of clarification are entirely normal at this early stage of the examination process.

Initial Comments

The Plan provides a comprehensive vision for the neighbourhood area, and is underpinned by the package of Assessments, and the Design Guidance and Codes. The proposed Community Actions complement the policies.

The presentation of the Plan is good. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is clear. In addition, the maps have been well-prepared.

Points for Clarification

I have read the submitted documents and the representations made to the Plan. I have also visited the neighbourhood area. I am now able to raise issues for clarification with the Parish Council.

The comments made on the points in this Note will be used to assist in the preparation of the examination report and in recommending any modifications that may be necessary to the Plan to ensure that it meets the basic conditions. I set out specific policy clarification points below in the order in which they appear in the submitted Plan:

Policy 3

I looked at the proposed local green spaces (LGSs) during the visit. I noted the scale and significance of LGS 4 (the old recreation field) and LGS 9 (the recreation ground).

There is an opportunity to respond to the representation by Mather Jamie later in this Note. In this broader context, it would be helpful if the Parish Council would:

- expand on its assessment of the significance of the pond to the west of Bradmere Lane (LGS2); and
- expand on the extent to which the proposed LGS12 (Grove Field) is demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance.

Policy 4

I looked at the proposed views during the visit. I noted their scale and significance and the way in which they captured the relationship between the village and the surrounding countryside.

Policy 5

In general terms the policy addresses dark skies well. However, I am minded to recommend that the order of the third and fourth parts is reversed so that the policy has a more natural flow. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy 6

This is an excellent policy which provides a good local response to Section 12 of the NPPF. It is underpinned by excellent work on the character appraisal.

I am minded to recommend that the middle part of the policy (the summary of the key characteristics) is repositioned into the supporting text as it explains what is required by way of information to support a planning application rather than an operating as a land use policy. Does the Parish Council have any comments on this proposition?

Policy 8

The approach taken in the policy is entirely appropriate. Nevertheless, does it bring any added value to national and local planning policies?

Policy 9

This is a distinctive local policy that is underpinned by the Evidence Base Paper.

Policy 10

I saw importance of the various community facilities during the visit.

I note the connection made by the policy to relevant Local Plan policies. For my clarity, are the relevant Local Plan policies those identified in paragraph 109 of the Plan?

Representations

It would be helpful if the Parish Council responded to the representation made by Mather Jamie on behalf of the owners of LGSs 2 and 12.

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses to these questions by 23 February 2026. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It is intended to maintain the momentum of the examination.

If certain responses are available before others, I would be happy to receive the information on a piecemeal basis. Irrespective of how the information is assembled, please could it come to me directly from the Borough Council. In addition, please can all responses make direct reference to the policy or the matter concerned.

Andrew Ashcroft

Independent Examiner

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2 February 2026