

EXAMINATION OF THE BEECH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

PUBLIC HEARING – 12 FEBRUARY 2020

Notes of Hearing

Participants	Ann Skippers (AS) – Independent Examiner Graham Webb (GW) – Beech Parish Council John Slater (JS) – John Slater Planning Ltd, obo Beech Parish Council Tony Ransley (TR) – Beech Parish Council Victoria Potts (VP) – East Hampshire District Council Kevin Thurlow (KT) – East Hampshire District Council Richard Agnew (RA) – Gladman Developments Ltd Richard Crosthwaite (RC) – Gladman Developments Ltd
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1. Introduction

AS explained that the purpose of the hearing was to give Gladman Developments Ltd a fair chance to put forward their case concerning the Beech Neighbourhood Plan, to ensure that the issues raised in their Regulation 14 and Regulation 16 consultation responses are examined in satisfactory detail. AS noted that although only the invited participants could take part in the hearing, other responses to the Regulation 16 consultation would also be carefully considered through the examination process.

GW made an opening statement, apologising to the examiner, other participants and the general public for Beech Parish Council's failure to consider the Regulation 14 consultation response from Gladman Developments Ltd. RA noted that Gladman Developments Ltd ('Gladman') were present to explore the points made in their representations and that the Consultation Statement for the Beech Neighbourhood Plan had been deficient by omitting details of their Regulation 14 response. AS noted that the purpose of the hearing was to remedy this deficiency through exploring the points made by Gladman.

2. Neighbourhood Plan Policies – BPC02

RA stated that Policy BPC02 is negatively worded, could stifle the growth of Alton and is not flexible enough to accord with paragraph 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). RA suggested that the policy is re-worded to suggest that sites adjacent to Alton would be considered differently. GW noted that the policy as written reflects the wishes of Beech Parish residents as shown by the 2017 village questionnaire. GW suggested it is in general conformity with Policy CP19 of the East Hampshire Joint Core Strategy ('JCS'). KT noted that CP19 is a relevant policy from the JCS and referred to East Hampshire's response to the Regulation 16 consultation for further details. Neither Beech Parish Council nor EHDC supported Gladman's alternative wording for BPC02, contained in the latter's Regulation 16 representation.

ACTIONS *None*

3 Neighbourhood Plan Policies – BPC03

A map of the Parish boundary and the proposed area of non-coalescence with Alton was displayed. There was some confusion over the different areas of proposed housing development in Alton shown on the map, and their status. These were clarified. AS

requested details from Beech Parish Council on how the non-coalescence areas for Policy BPC-03 had been defined. GW confirmed that the Beech Landscape Character Assessment (2018) together with knowledge of the location of existing and proposed/promoted development in Beech and Alton had informed the proposed non-coalescence areas. TR explained the items of historical significance, and GW the topographical detail. KT highlighted paragraph 7.29 in the JCS as relevant for identifying the strategic purpose of defining a gap between settlements. RA suggested that a criteria-based approach to avoiding coalescence, as part of an amalgamated Policy BPC02 and BPC03 would be more appropriate. RA agreed to provide some suggested wording, taking the key points from BPC-02 and BPC-03. GW suggested that amalgamation could prove unwieldy and noted that the maps for the two policies were different. KT noted that EHDC has also proposed a criteria-based approach to maintaining gaps between settlements in its draft Local Plan; but that it would be possible to pursue a map-based approach in the Beech Neighbourhood Plan. GW noted that no gap involving Beech has been identified within the JCS and that the Neighbourhood Plan is therefore seeking to include one, to be effective both now and under the new Local Plan, to ensure that Beech's identity is not lost.

ACTIONS 1) *Gladman to suggest new wording to support its proposal for amalgamating BPC-02 and BPC-03 and for replacing a map-based definition of non-coalescence areas with a criteria based approach to maintaining the separate identities of places for all parties to consider.*

4 **Neighbourhood Plan Policies – BPC-06**
 RC suggested that this policy lacked clarity regarding the geography of its application and that it should therefore be re-worded. KT noted that EHDC had made a similar point in its Regulation 16 response. GW noted that the policy was drafted to apply to development only within Beech village rather than to the entire parish. TR suggested that its application only to the village area could be implied from the existing wording. Beech Parish Council agreed to provide some suggested new wording to make clear where the policy should apply. AS asked if the policy would be in general conformity with the JCS. KT noted that saved policy H10 of the Local Plan, referenced by GW, does not have an up-to-date evidence base; and that the contents of the recently prepared East Hampshire Neighbourhood Character Study should be taken into account. GW explained that the counterpart to policy H10 reproduced in Policy BPC06 is intended to cater for the possibility that policy H10 will not be fully replicated in the impending new Local Plan. Its inclusion reflects the wishes of Beech Parish residents and the support in the Beech Landscape Character Assessment (2018) for retaining the current minimum new plot size in the Special Housing Area.

ACTIONS 2) *Beech Parish Council to suggest new wording for the policy or supporting text, to clarify its view on an appropriate geography for applying the criteria of Policy BPC-06 for all parties to consider*

5 **Other Issues Raised by Gladman Developments Ltd**
 In response to a question by AS, RA stated that Gladman was happy to rely on its written submission concerning policies BPC-04, BPC-07, BPC-08, BPC-10 and BPC-12. RA confirmed that they had nothing further to explore at the hearing regarding the other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. RA noted that Gladman was grateful for the opportunity of appearing at the hearing and that it had been helpful to discuss certain issues in more detail and hear from the parish council in response. AS asked whether the

hearing had provided an opportunity for Gladman to have a fair chance to put forward its case. RA agreed that the hearing had provided such an opportunity and that Gladman was happy for the examiner to consider her conclusions through the examination process. No further matters were raised by the participants.

THE HEARING WAS CLOSED AT 16:15

Meeting note produced by the Independent Examiner and EHDC, in consultation with Beech Parish Council and Gladman Developments Ltd.

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