

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

EXAMINER: Andrew Mead BSc (Hons) MRTPI MIQ

Examination Ref: 01/AM/NNP

Guy Langton  
Clerk to Northam Town Council

Tristan Otten  
Planning Policy Officer  
Torridge District Council

4 November 2025

Dear Mr Langton and Mr Otten

Following the submission of the Northam Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan) for examination, I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters.

1. Examination Documentation

I can confirm that I am satisfied that I have received the draft Plan and accompanying documentation, including the Basic Conditions Statement; the Consultation Statement; and the Regulation 16 representations, to enable me to undertake the examination.

I am also aware (from the Basic Conditions Statement which details the response of the statutory consultees to these documents) that a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Opinion has been undertaken. However, I would like to request that the District Council provides me with copies of these two documents and also ensures these are available on its website.

Subject to my detailed assessment of the draft Plan, I have not at this initial stage identified any very significant and obvious flaws in the Plan 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 this week (i.e. **the week commencing 3 November 2025**). 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 anticipate that I may have a number of questions following my site visit, which I will set out in writing separately.

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. 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 – 8 weeks of submission of the draft Plan.

However, in the likely event that I have a number of questions seeking clarification as a result of my site visit, I must provide the opportunity for you to reply. This would mean that the examination timetable would be extended. Please be assured that I would seek to mitigate any delay as far as is practicable. The IPe office team will keep you updated on the examination and, in due course, the 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 Town Council and District Council websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

*Andy Mead*

Examiner