

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE COLDEAN  
NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020-2035**

EXAMINER: DEREK STEBBING BA (Hons) DipEP MRTPI

Examination Ref: 01/DAS/CNP

Debbie Annells  
Coldean Neighbourhood Planning Forum

Carly Dockerill  
Brighton & Hove City Council

Via email

11 February 2026

Dear Ms Annells and Ms Dockerill

Following the submission of the Coldean Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2030 (the Plan) for examination, I would like to clarify several initial procedural matters. I also have two questions for the Coldean Neighbourhood Planning Forum (the Qualifying Body) and Brighton & Hove City Council (the City Council), to which I would like to receive a written response(s) by **Friday 27 March 2026** if possible.

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; the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report; and the Regulation 16 representations, to enable me to undertake the examination.

Subject to my further detailed assessment of the draft Plan, I have not at this initial stage identified any significant and obvious flaws 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 2 March 2026. 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 two matters where I require some additional information from the City Council and the Qualifying Body. I confirm that I have no matters that require additional information from the South Downs National Park Authority. I have set out the two questions seeking further clarification in the Annex to this letter.

I would be grateful if you can aim to provide a written response(s) by **Friday 27 March 2026**. This is an extended period that is longer than would normally be requested, as I acknowledge that the Qualifying Body may need further time to address the points that are raised.

#### 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 – 8 weeks of submission of the draft Plan. However, as I raised the annexed questions, I must provide you with sufficient opportunity to reply. Consequentially, the examination timetable will 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 Neighbourhood Forum, the South Downs National Park Authority and City Council's websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

*Derek Stebbing*

Examiner

## ANNEX

From my initial reading of the Coldean Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2030 (Submission Version dated September 2025), the supporting evidence and the representations that have been made to the Plan, I have the following two questions for the Qualifying Body and the City Council. I have requested the submission of responses **by Friday 27 March 2026**. The points set out below flow from the requirement to satisfy the Basic Conditions.

### **Question 1: Re. Comments by Brighton & Hove City Council on the Submission Plan**

The City Council has raised extensive comments on the Submission Plan, comprising a Schedule of Comments extending to 34 pages in length.

The City Council's comments cover most aspects of the draft Plan, primarily suggesting revised drafting for parts of the Plan's supporting text but also suggesting revisions to the text of Policies H1, H2, LGS1, C1, T1, T3, T4, T5, DC1, E1, E2, E3, E4 and E5.

The extent of the City Council's comments would necessitate a wide range of modifications to the Submission Plan, should I be minded to agree with the City Council's suggestions.

Therefore, it is my view that the **Qualifying Body** should, in the first instance, address the City Council's comments in full and, if possible, provide me with an amended copy of the draft Plan (in Word format) incorporating those amendments and revisions that the Qualifying Body considers can be made in response to the City Council's comments.

This will enable me to focus my examination in terms of managing the potential recommended modifications to the draft Plan and is likely to shorten my reporting time.

I do recognise that this will involve a significant and intensive period of work for the Neighbourhood Planning Forum and accordingly I am extending the deadline for receipt of the Forum's response to Friday 27 March 2026.

### **Question 2: Re. City Plan 2041**

Can the **City Council** please provide an update on the emerging new Local Plan 'City Plan 2041'? The latest timetable published on the City Council's website advises the draft Plan is progressing towards a second Regulation 18 consultation July - September 2026, and the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission consultation in Autumn 2027.

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