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Report on Guisborough Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2025 - 2040

**An Examination undertaken for Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
with the support of the Guisborough Town Council on the September
2025 submission version of the Plan.**

Independent Examiner: Patrick T Whitehead DipTP (Nott) MRTPI

Date of Report: 9 March 2026

Intelligent Plans and Examinations (IPE) Ltd, Office 10, 5 Argyle Street, Bath BA2 4BA

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Main Findings - Executive Summary

From my examination of the Guisborough Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan/GCPNP) and its supporting documentation including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to the policy modifications set out in this report, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body – Guisborough Town Council;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Guisborough Neighbourhood Plan Area, map on page 9 of the Plan;
- The Plan specifies the period to which it is to take effect – 2025 - 2040; and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements.

I have considered whether the referendum area should extend beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates and have concluded that it should not.

1. Introduction and Background

The Guisborough Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2025 - 2040

- 1.1 Guisborough is a market town around 15 kilometres south-east of Middlesbrough and about 12 kilometres south of Redcar. It was recorded in the Domesday Book as having a church, a mill and around 3,000 acres of farmland, indicating the existence of a well-established Anglo Saxon (or earlier) settlement. The ruined Guisborough Priory dates from the 12th century. The town was transformed through the 19th century through the development of the Teesside iron and steel industry and the exploitation of the Cleveland ironstone. As these industries declined and the railway closed, Guisborough has become a mainly dormitory town for the Teesside conurbation. The 2021 Census shows a population of 18,878 in the extensive (66.71 sq.km) Civil Parish.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan was undertaken by Guisborough Town Council to give people of the Civil Parish the opportunity for a say in how the community will develop within the next 15 years. The Civil Parish extends beyond the boundary of the town of Guisborough to include surrounding settlements of Dunsdale, Newton-under-Roseberry, Hutton Village, Upleatham and a small part of Slapewath. The views and concerns of the people have provided the information and evidence on which the Plan's policies have been based.

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The Independent Examiner

- 1.3 As the Plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of the Guisborough Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan (GCPNP) by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council (RCBC), with the agreement of the Guisborough Town Council (GTC).
- 1.4 I am a chartered town planner and former government Planning Inspector, with more than 20 years' experience inspecting and examining development plans. I am an independent examiner, and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the draft Plan.

The Scope of the Examination

- 1.5 As the independent examiner I am required to produce this report and recommend either:
- (a) that the neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum without changes; or
 - (b) that modifications are made and that the modified neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum; or
 - (c) that the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to a referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 1.6 The scope of the examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) ('the 1990 Act'). The examiner must consider:
- Whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions.
 - Whether the plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ('the 2004 Act'). These are:
 - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the local planning authority;
 - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
 - it specifies the period during which it has effect;
 - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'; and
 - it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area.
 - Whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum.

- Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)('the 2012 Regulations').
- 1.7 I have considered only matters that fall within Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, with one exception. That is the requirement that the Plan is compatible with the Human Rights Convention.

The Basic Conditions

1.8 The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:

- Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
- Not breach, and be otherwise compatible with, assimilated obligations¹; and
- Meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

1.9 Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.²

2. Approach to the Examination

Planning Policy Context

2.1 The Development Plan for this part of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, not including documents relating to excluded minerals and waste development, is the Redcar and Cleveland Local Plan (RCLP) adopted May 2018 and for the part of the Plan area which is within the North York Moors National Park, the North York Moors National Park Authority Local Plan, adopted in July 2020.

¹ See: The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Consequential Amendment) Regulations 2023, which replaced the previous reference to 'EU' obligations.

² This revised Basic Condition came into force on 28 December 2018 through the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018.

2.2 Planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is accompanied by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which offers guidance on how this policy should be implemented. All references in this report are to the latest iteration of the NPPF, December 2024 and the accompanying PPG.

Submitted Documents

- 2.3 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, including:
- the draft Guisborough Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2025 -2040, September 2025;
 - the map on page 9 of the Plan which identifies the area to which the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan relates;
 - the Pre-Submission Draft Consultation Statement, November, 2025;
 - the Statement of Public Consultation, November, 2025;
 - the Basic Conditions Statement, September 2025;
 - the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion prepared by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, in consultation with the North York Moors National Park, October 2025;
 - the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Assessment Guisborough Neighbourhood Plan, prepared by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, in consultation with the North York Moors National Park, October 2025;
 - the Evidence Base for Guisborough Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan, September 2025;
 - the Green Space Site Reports - Guisborough Town Council;
 - all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation; and
 - the responses to my letter of 14 January, from GTC dated 21 January 2026, and from RCBC dated 23 January 2026 and GTC's response to my additional question of 2 February, dated 5 February 2026.³

Site Visit

2.4 I made an unaccompanied site visit to the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 21 January 2026 to familiarise myself with it, and visit relevant sites and areas referenced in the Plan and evidential documents.

Written Representations with or without Public Hearing

2.5 This examination has been dealt with by written representations. I considered hearing sessions to be unnecessary as the consultation responses clearly articulated the objections to the Plan, and presented arguments for and against the Plan's suitability to proceed to a referendum. There were no requests for a hearing amongst the Regulation 16 responses.

³ View at: <https://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-planning/guisborough-neighbourhood-area-planning>

Modifications

- 2.6 Where necessary, I have recommended modifications to the Plan (**PMs**) in this report in order that it meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. For ease of reference, I have listed these modifications separately in the Appendix.

3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights

Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 3.1 The Guisborough Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by Guisborough Town Council, which is a qualifying body for an area that was designated by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council on 11 July 2023 and by North York Moors National Park Authority on 22 August 2025.
- 3.2 It is the only Neighbourhood Plan for the Guisborough Plan area and does not relate to land outside the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Plan Period

- 3.3 The Plan specifies clearly the period to which it is to take effect, which is from 2025 to 2040.

Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation

- 3.4 The Steering Group set up a Neighbourhood Plan webpage to the GTC's website and used this to broadcast information, updates and draft proposals. It then provided a context for an initial public engagement in June 2024. This was widely publicised and sought information from local residents to identify and gauge the areas of concern that might be addressed through the Neighbourhood Plan. These areas of concern included transport, green spaces, the built environment and tourism and leisure, with each area of concern subdivided into sub-topics. The survey was online but a paper copy, with a response form, was also made available and a face-to-face session was held.
- 3.5 Face to face meetings were held in January and February 2025 covering the concept of the Plan and progress to date. These were followed by publication of the Green Space Sites Reports and the Evidence Base in March/April 2025. The draft Plan was updated and published in June, followed by a pre-submission Regulation 14 consultation commencing on 3 July and concluding on 15 August 2025. There were 10 responses from the Statutory Consultees and 48 submissions via the GTC website.
- 3.6 The Regulation 16 consultation took place between 10 November and 22 December 2025 which drew 16 responses, all but one being supportive or

offering no specific comments. The one objection relates to Policy GS5 and the live planning application, R/2025/0579/FFM.

- 3.7 With all these points in mind, I am satisfied that a thorough, transparent and inclusive consultation process has been sought for the Plan, having regard to the advice in the PPG about plan preparation and engagement and in accordance with the legal requirements.

Development and Use of Land

- 3.8 The Plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in accordance with s.38A of the 2004 Act.

Excluded Development

- 3.9 The Plan does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'.⁴

Human Rights

- 3.10 Guisborough Town Council is satisfied that the Plan does not breach Human Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998)⁵, and from my independent assessment I see no reason to disagree.

4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

Assimilated Obligations

- 4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan was screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, in consultation with the North York Moors National Park, which found that it was unlikely to result in significant environmental effects because the Plan covers a relatively small area and does not allocate sites for development.⁶ It was, therefore, concluded that it would not be necessary to undertake SEA. Having read the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion, I support this conclusion.
- 4.2 The Neighbourhood Plan was further screened for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), which concluded that because "*the policies will not lead to likely significant effects on protected European sites an Appropriate Assessment is not required*".⁷ From my independent assessment of this matter, I have no reason to disagree.

⁴ The meaning of 'excluded development' is set out in s.61K of the 1990 Act.

⁵ Basic Conditions Statement, September 2025, Appendix, page 15.

⁶ SEA Report, RCBC, October 2025, paragraph 5.1.

⁷ HRA Screening Assessment, RCBC, October 2025, paragraph 7.2.

4.3 I have noted the objection submitted at Regulation 16 stage by the Teesmouth Bird Club regarding the conclusions of the Screening Report, specifically relating to the conservation of habitats, and the status of swifts as a 'Category Red Species of Concern'. However, the submission refers specifically to Guisborough CAMP HRA Screening pdf (the Conservation Area Management Plan) which is not the Plan under consideration at this examination. From my reading of the evidence in respect of this Neighbourhood Plan, it is clear that the Plan proposals will not directly impact on the nesting cavities of the species. The responses by the statutory consultees - the Environment Agency (GNP/003) and Natural England (GNP/14) - have not raised any matters of concern, which support this conclusion.

Main Issues

4.4 Having regard for the Guisborough Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan, the consultation responses and other evidence, and the site visit, I consider that there are 2 main issues relating to the Basic Conditions for this examination. These are:

- General compliance of the Plan as a whole, having regard to national policy and advice (including sustainable development) and the adopted strategic local planning policies; and
- Specific issues of compliance of the Plan policies, including the appropriateness of individual policies to support improvements to the Plan area, create a sustainable and inclusive community and support essential facilities and services.

4.5 As part of that assessment, I shall consider whether the policies are sufficiently clear and unambiguous, having regard to advice in the PPG that a neighbourhood plan should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence.⁸

General Issues of Compliance of the Plan

4.6 The Plan makes no new housing allocations, but focuses on providing guidance on housing mix, design and energy efficiency for new developments. Given the importance attached to securing a sufficient amount and variety of land that can come forward where it is needed⁹, it is important to consider whether the GCPNP has sufficient regard to national policy in this respect.

4.7 The Five Year Housing Land Supply Assessment, produced by RCBC, dated June 2025, shows a total five year requirement of 3,155 dwellings, equivalent to 631 per annum (paragraph 4.1). The supply analysis

⁸ PPG Reference ID: 41-041-20140306.

⁹ NPPF, paragraph 61.

provides an estimated deliverable supply – April 2025 to March 2030 – of 1,901 dwellings, equating to 3.01 years supply (paragraph 4.5). However, the Assessment concludes (paragraph 5.2) that the supply estimate can be achieved given three assumptions: it is below recent net completion rates; most of the supply would be on existing development sites; and no allowance has been made for completions on large windfall sites.

- 4.8 The RCLP includes the aim for the majority of development to take place *“..in the most sustainable locations in our urban and coastal areas. We will maximise the re-use of previously developed land and limit the unnecessary development of greenfield sites”* (paragraph 1.47) and includes Policy SD 1 which takes a positive approach *“that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development”*. Guisborough is not included as a settlement within the Urban Area Spatial Strategy outlined in Policy LS 1. Nor is it identified as a settlement within the Coastal Area Spatial Strategy specified in Policy LS 2. Rather, Guisborough is identified as a rural community covered by Policy LS 3 where the policy is set down as to *“enhance the role of Guisborough as the principal rural service centre and promote independent businesses including the retail, leisure and tourism sectors, as well as a focus for new housing”*. The town is also identified as a District Centre in economic terms under Policy ED 1.
- 4.9 In addition, the RCLP indicates a minimum requirement of 234 net additional houses per annum over the Plan period to 2031/32, with Guisborough providing a total of 241 dwellings by 2032 over four sites – Wilton Lane, Park Lane, Cleveland Gate and Galley Hill. The Evidence Base (September 2025) quotes RCBC Planning Strategy Manager as follows: *“Planning records show that of these (the 241 allocated dwellings), 191 have already completed or the site is under construction. The remaining 50 are on a site with an extant detailed planning permission.”* It concludes that *“It is too early to say where the next plan will allocate its housing requirement or how much will be in the Guisborough Neighbourhood Plan area.”* In accord with this, the GNP makes no additional allocations.
- 4.10 Planning Practice Guidance indicates that where it is not possible for strategic policies to set out a housing requirement figure for designated neighbourhood areas, Neighbourhood plans *“should consider....allocating reserve sites to ensure that emerging evidence of housing need is addressed”*.¹⁰ However, given all of the above and the absence of clear evidence of housing need or where new allocations would be required, how much would be in Guisborough in the next Local Plan, or even when work on a replacement Local Plan might commence, it is my conclusion that the GTC were in no position to put forward additional allocations.
- 4.11 Accordingly, I have concluded that the GCPNP – subject to the specific modifications I recommend below - as a whole, has regard to national

¹⁰ PPG: Reference ID: 41-009-20190509.

policy and advice and the adopted strategic local planning policies and will contribute positively to sustainable development for the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Specific Issues of Compliance of the Plan Policies.

The Built Environment

Policy BE1 – Housing Mix

- 4.12 The Policy seeks to ensure that new housing developments have regard to the particular local needs, based on the evidence contained in the built environment Evidence Base¹¹, and in the RCBC Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2016 Update.¹² The particular local need identified in Policy BE1 is for developments which meet the needs of the elderly or people with disabilities. In this respect the Policy has regard to the NPPF, paragraphs 61 – 63: in particular that “*the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed*”.
- 4.13 The RCLP includes Policy H2 specifying the expectations for the type and mix of housing for the Borough as a whole. These include increasing the supply of ‘executive style’ housing and the supply of bungalows, whilst providing “*an appropriate mix of house types and sizes which reflects local housing needs and demand*” (criterion b). The Neighbourhood Plan Policy BE1 responds to the perceived local housing needs in Guisborough and so is in general conformity with the local strategic plan.
- 4.14 In response to the Examiner’s questions, point 4, GTC has suggested an addition to paragraph 9.1.4 of the supporting text identifying the specific local needs to be addressed by the Policy. This is entirely appropriate and is included as a proposed modification **PM1**. I have concluded that, with appropriate amendments, the Policy meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy BE2 – Design Principles and Maintenance of Distinctive Character

- 4.15 The RCLP includes comprehensive design policies for housing development, including Policy SD4 regarding general development principles, which sets down criteria to be met by proposals for development. The Borough Council has also issued two relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs): the Redcar and Cleveland Urban Design Guidelines SPD and the Design of Residential Areas SPD. The GCPNP seeks to supplement the above policy and guidance in order to address the local circumstances of Guisborough. It provides additional advice and information through Policy BE2 which provides criteria to be considered, where appropriate, for all proposals for development. In

¹¹ Evidence Base, paragraph 3.2.

¹² Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2016 Update, Peter Brett Associates, September 2016.

general terms, therefore, it is in conformity with strategic local policies and guidance.

- 4.16 The NPPF emphasises the importance of achieving well designed places, indicating that *“good design is a key aspect of sustainable development”* (paragraph 131). Policy BE2 seeks to apply this principle through providing detailed criteria to be applied to development proposals. The criteria relate to aspects of development specific to the Parish, to the Conservation Area, and to ensure proposals meet identified needs such as internet provision and electric vehicle charge points. The Basic Conditions Statement details the specific parts and paragraphs of the NPPF relevant to the Policy. Having reviewed the Policy in the context of these parts of the NPPF, it is my conclusion that due regard has been had to national policy and advice in the NPPF. Accordingly, the Policy itself does meet the Basic Conditions.
- 4.17 However, in order to provide a more comprehensive context for the application of the Policy, it is necessary in the text accompanying the Policy to make clear reference to the various RCLP documents providing design guidance and advice in regard to the Conservation Area. It would also be helpful to those using the Plan if a plan showing the Guisborough Conservation Area were to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. GTC has agreed that additions to the Plan could be made to address these matters¹³ and these form the basis for proposed modification **PM2**.

Policy BE3 – Provision of well-designed energy-efficient buildings and places

- 4.18 A key aspect of the Government’s policies for the planning system is that it should support the transition to net zero by 2050.¹⁴ To achieve this, the NPPF advises, amongst other measures, that new development should be planned in ways that *“help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design”* (paragraph 164 (b)). Policy BE3 seeks to achieve a high level of sustainable design and construction, through the provision of criteria to be met by all new developments. In this regard the Policy has had regard to national policies and advice.
- 4.19 The Evidence Base, Section 2, provides the basis for Policy BE3, indicating that there is an urgent need to address climate change, and stating *“the Guisborough Civil Parish NP aims to demonstrate true Climate Change leadership and do all it can to promote policies that will support all aspects of Climate Change limitation and adaption”* (paragraph 2.0.14). New developments would be required to meet a high level of sustainable design and construction, meeting, where appropriate, the list of five criteria. The most relevant RCLP policy is SD4 which sets down general development principles, including that development proposals will be expected to *“be sustainable in design and construction, incorporating best practice in resource management, energy efficiency and climate change*

¹³ Responses to the Examiner’s Questions, points 5, 6 and 7.

¹⁴ NPPF, paragraph 161.

adaptation". Policy BE3 in this Plan builds on this by adding detailed local requirements. It is, therefore in general conformity with the local strategic policy framework.

- 4.20 There is additional guidance contained in the RCBC document, Urban Design Guidelines SPD, page 23, which refers to the need to secure domestic energy efficiency (paragraph 4.37). It would be appropriate to include a reference to this document in the supporting text to Policy BE3 and, in response to the Examiner's questions, GTC has agreed to amend paragraph 9.1.15, inserting additional text. Additionally, the first sentence of the Policy is over-long and not easy to interpret. An amended text, as suggested by proposed modification **PM3**, would ensure clarity. For the reasons given above, I have concluded that the Policy meets the Basic Conditions.

Green Spaces

- 4.21 The focus of the remainder of the Plan is the green spaces. Guisborough has 48 green spaces shown on two plans (pages 29-30), mostly within the main town of Guisborough, with insets for Newton under Roseberry, Hutton Village and Dunsdale. The Plan seeks to provide protection for a number of these, mostly by designation as 'Open Space' as defined by the NPPF, paragraph 104 and subject to the criteria contained therein. Two areas of green space – Chapel Beck Valley and Hutton Beck Meadows East are defined in Policy GS5 and designated as Local Green Space in accordance with NPPF, paragraphs 106 and 107.
- 4.22 Whilst I will consider each policy separately, each one (apart from the second part of Policy GS5) follows the same formula, which is to simply state that the green space will be subject to the conditions of the NPPF, paragraph 104. However, this does not meet the test in the NPPF, paragraph 16(f) that plans "*should serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework, where relevant)*". In addition to the NPPF, the RCLP provides protection for open space and recreational space through Policy N3. This provides criteria which must be met prior to any development being permitted "*on areas of primary or secondary open space, as shown on the Policies Map*", but also provides protection for "*any other amenity open space or sport and recreational land and buildings, including playing fields*". The Examiner's questions asked GTC whether "*a specific locally derived policy statement could be substituted in these policies?*"¹⁵ The Town Council responded with a revised text for each policy which I will consider in detail below.

Policy GS1 – Nightingale Road Park

- 4.23 Nightingale Road forms the spine serving an area of ongoing new development at the western extremity of Guisborough. The park is a

¹⁵ Response to Examiner's Questions, point 11.

large, roughly rectangular space adjacent to the road, mostly open with existing mature trees along the eastern boundary and some new planting. It is described in the Green Space Site Reports (GSSR) Part 2, reference number 48. There is an area of playspace with some equipment. From my visit, it clearly forms a visual break in the housing and provides green space for play and for local dog walkers. Its formation post-dates the RCLP so it is not designated by Policy N3. It is well maintained and appears to be well-used and relates well to the criteria for inclusion in Policy N3 as an open space “*provided as part of residential development*” that “*can help to create high quality design and can contribute to the distinctiveness, character and amenity of an area*”.¹⁶ It is also in line with the NPPF, paragraph 104, as an existing open space which should be protected from development unless strict criteria are met. In summary, the Policy is in general conformity with the local strategic planning framework, and consistent with Government advice in the NPPF.

- 4.24 The GTC has sought to address the criticism that the policy merely reiterates the NPPF guidance by providing additional text to replace the final sentence as follows: “*Development will not be permitted unless the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use*”. This forms a useful basis for an appropriate statement of policy, but could be more closely aligned to the provisions of the RCLP Policy N3. In addition, the convention is for neighbourhood plan policies to be framed in terms of not supporting (as opposed to not permitting), given it is the local planning authority that determines proposals for development. Proposed modification **PM4** provides an amended text, with which the Policy will meet the Basic Conditions.

Policy GS2 – The Branch Walkway

- 4.25 The Branch Walkway is a linear footpath following the line of a former branch railway. It is described in the GSSR, Part 2, reference number 42, and mapped in two parts – the western and eastern parts. It performs a number of local functions, including a forming a car-free route for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders. It was clear to me that many residential areas have direct access to the path through culs-de-sac links. It also forms an important wildlife corridor. The path bridges Belmangate and continues eastwards into open countryside. From my visit, I saw walkers along the route and it appears very well used. Its protection would be in general conformity with the provisions of RCLP Policy N3 and in line with the advice in the NPPF, paragraph 104.
- 4.26 Additional text replacing the final sentence of the Policy has been provided by GTC in response to the Examiner’s questions, as follows: “*development will not be permitted unless the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of size and quality in a suitable location*”. Whilst this relates to paragraph

¹⁶ Redcar and Cleveland Local Plan, paragraph 7.28.

104 of the NPPF, it does not relate well to the particular circumstance in that it implies an unrealistic expectation that an alternative provision would be acceptable, or even possible. As a consequence, proposed modification **PM5** includes amended text to ensure protection for this valuable asset. The amended Policy meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy GS3 – Rufford Close Link

- 4.27 Rufford Close Link (GSSR, Part 1, reference number 22) performs a similar function to the Branch Walkway in that it provides a link to a pathway to open countryside for a significant area of residential development in the southern part of Guisborough. In effect it runs from Enfield Chase through to Rufford Close and then links to a path into open countryside. It is also an attractive feature within the housing areas having been landscaped with trees and shrubs. As with the Branch Walkway, its protection would be in general conformity with the provisions of RCLP Policy N3 and in line with the advice in the NPPF, paragraph 104.
- 4.28 The additional text proposed by GTC in response to the Examiner's questions has a similar shortcoming to that proposed for the Branch Walkway, in that it is difficult to see how the function of this Link could be replaced by a similar feature elsewhere – it simply would not fulfil the same function. Accordingly the proposed modification **PM6** provides an amended text to ensure the protection of the Link. As amended, the Policy meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy GS4 – Allotment Gardens

- 4.29 There are four areas of privately owned allotments, three within or adjacent to the built up area of Guisborough and the fourth located at the outlying settlement of Dunsdale. They are referenced in the GSSR, Part 1, reference numbers 13 and 15, and Part 2, reference numbers 27 and 40. Allotments are valuable assets for individuals and society as a whole, playing an important role in promoting health, community engagement, and environmental sustainability. They are also vulnerable to development pressures. All of the allotment areas that I saw during my visit appear to be well used and, in the main, well maintained. In the case of the allotments at Dunsdale, which fronts on to the B1269 Redcar Road, a significant part of the area is grassed, rather than used for vegetable growing. Their value to the community for recreational purposes and as refuges for some wildlife is clear and recognised in the text accompanying RCLP Policy N3 (paragraph 7.29) which confirms the Policy would apply to allotments. Although the NPPF does not specifically mention allotments, paragraph 103 refers to the importance of open spaces for physical activity for the health and well-being of communities.
- 4.30 The Policy contained in the draft Plan simply refers to the national policy contained in the NPPF, paragraph 104. However, in response to the Examiner's questions, GTC has proposed to substitute an amended, more locally focussed statement of policy. This proposed amended text, with

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adjustments, is included as proposed modification **PM7**. In addition to being in general conformity with local planning policies, the amended Policy has had regard to national advice and guidance in the NPPF, and so meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy GS5 – Privately-owned Meadows

- 4.31 Policy GS5 relates to three areas of open space, described in the Plan as three of five “*privately-owned meadows*”.¹⁷ The first is a field described as next to the Sea Cadets’ hut (GSSR, Part 1, ref no 18), the second to Chapel Beck Valley (GSSR, Part 2, reference number 36), and Hutton Beck Meadows East (GSSR, Part 1, reference number 17). The former site is proposed to be designated as ‘Open Space’, whilst the remaining two areas would become ‘Local Green Space’ (LGS), in line with NPPF, paragraph 107. The Policy is paired with a Parish Aspiration regarding land described as Hutton Beck Meadows West (GSSR, Part 1, reference number 16). The reason given for the latter site to be excluded from the Policy is there is currently a live planning application for a substantial part of the land.
- 4.32 The first matter to deal with is the description of the sites: the land subject to the live planning application, R/2025/0579/FFM, referred to in the Regulation 16 submission on behalf of Miller Homes Ltd, relates to the whole of the site described as Hutton Beck Meadows East, apart from a parcel of land at the western extremity. In response to an additional Examiner’s question (dated 2 February 2026), GTC has confirmed (message date 5 February 2026) that this is the case. However, a joint response by RCBC and GTC (letter dated 24 February 2026), has indicated that a second live planning application, R/2023/0746/RSM, relates to Hutton Beck Meadows West. The letter advises the Examination that “*it is acknowledged that the lack of clear reference to there being 2 live planning applications, one on each of the 2 Hutton Beck Meadows sites, may have led to some confusion over the naming*”.
- 4.33 The second matter is that Policy GS5 relates to 2 different designations with differing policy implications – notably that the designation Local Green Space carries with it the requirement that “*decisions for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts*”.¹⁸ Clarity of intent requires that the different designations require Policy GS5 to be divided into two separate policies. However, giving the new policies the titles GS5a and GS5b does not provide sufficient distinction so the policies should be referred to as Policy GS5 and Policy LGS1, and spatially separated within the Plan. The supporting text at paragraphs 9.2.23 – 9.2.36 should be relocated with the new Policy LGS1. These amendments form part of the proposed modifications within **PM8**.

¹⁷ GCPNP, paragraph 9.2.27.

¹⁸ NPPF, paragraph 108.

The field next to the Sea Cadets Hut

- 4.34 The field next to the Sea Cadets' Hut is located outside the Development Limits for Guisborough defined by RCLP Policy SD3. It is also within the Guisborough Conservation Area and close to the site of Guisborough Priory. It is described in the GSSR, Part 1, reference number 18, as a rough grassland field and is designated as a Restoration Landscape Area in the Local Plan Policy N1, where "*opportunities should be taken to repair or reinstate the landscape structure*". However, the Local Plan stops short of including it within Policy N3 as 'Open Space and Recreation'. The GSSR suggests its value to the community is as "*an informal games space by the cadets and scouts, as well as for grazing horses*". The Policy is in general conformity with the Local Plan policies, and consistent with the NPPF, paragraph 104. From my visit, and from the evidence above, and its potential contribution to biodiversity, I concur with the proposed designation as 'Open Space'. In answer to the Examiner's questions, GTC has suggested a revised text for the Policy which I have used as a basis for an amended Policy GS5, included in proposed modification **PM8**. However, due to the location within the Conservation Area, the proposed modification also contains an appropriate addition.

Chapel Beck Valley

- 4.35 Although there is no public access to Chapel Beck Valley, the access track was open at the time of my visit and I could see that the GSSR, Part 2, reference number 36, accurately describes the land as "*unmanaged*". It is a large area of private land owned by Northumbrian Water Ltd, and its value is seen as an "*undisturbed green environment providing a wide variety of habitats*". Whilst the northern part is subject to Local Plan Policy N2 which identifies the area adjacent to the A171 as a Strategic Landscape Area, the remainder is not covered by planning policies. In relation to the NPPF criteria for designation as LGS, Chapel Beck Valley is in close proximity to the community, it is special in that, as an undisturbed green space it clearly provides habitats for wildlife, and it is not an extensive tract of land. I also consider the designation is capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period. It follows that the designation as LGS is consistent with national policy and guidance in addition to being in general conformity with the local strategic planning policies.

Hutton Beck Meadows West and Hutton Beck Meadows East

- 4.36 The area known as Hutton Beck Meadows West has no public access and is not readily visible from public areas, except along parts of Fanacurt Road and Meynall Avenue, where glimpses of the landscape are possible through the tree and hedgeline cover. It is subject of a live planning application submitted by Newett Homes for a total of 56 dwellings (application R/2023/0746/RSM). The GSSR, Part 1, reference number 16, describes the land as ancient meadow grassland, unmanaged for many years. Its value is as "*a very significant haven for wildlife and for flood risk attenuation*" and "*forming a major part of the wildlife corridor into the*

heart of the town". Whilst no hard evidence has been provided to support these statements, from my visit I have no doubt that the land is a substantial reservoir of local wildlife, a view supported by the fact that it has remained undisturbed and without public access for a substantial period of time.

- 4.37 Hutton Beck Meadows East is also not readily visible from public areas, except from Hutton Lane, opposite Stump Cross. It too is subject of a live planning application submitted by Miller Homes Ltd for a total of 71 dwellings (application R/2025/0579/FFM). From my visit, it appears to match the description in the GSSR, Part 1, reference number 17, as ancient meadow grassland along Chapel Beck which has not been actively managed for many years. It is very probably a significant haven for wildlife, and its low lying nature alongside the beck suggests that it may well provide an area for flood attenuation – as suggested by the GSSR description, although there is no evidence before the Examination to support these assertions.
- 4.38 The GCPNP treats the two sites in a different manner. Hutton Beck Meadows East is proposed to be designated as LGS under Policy GS5, whilst Hutton Beck Meadows West is the subject of a Parish Aspiration in recognition of the live planning application. The Plan suggests that, were it not for the existence of the live planning application, it would meet the criteria for LGS designation in the same way as Hutton Beck Meadows East. It clearly cannot be the case that the two sites are treated in a different manner within the Neighbourhood Plan and I consider Hutton Beck Meadows East must be removed from the LGS designation and treated as a Parish Aspiration, until such time as the planning application is determined. This forms the basis for the proposed modification **PM8** to ensure the Basic Conditions are met.

Parish Aspiration

- 4.39 The Parish Aspiration is not a policy, but a wider community aspiration. It has a place in the Neighbourhood Plan, provided it is clearly identifiable as such, for example by being set out in a companion document or annex.¹⁹ In this instance, the aspirations are clearly differentiated from policies by a blue, rather than green box containing the text which I consider fulfils the requirement. However as previously indicated, it is necessary to amend the text to include reference to Hutton Beck Meadows East, in addition to Hutton Beck Meadows West, as shown in proposed modification **PM8**.

Policy GS6 – Dorset Road Green

- 4.39 Dorset Road is an area of relatively high density, mostly terraced housing where the small areas of green space, incorporated in the original planning of the area, are important to the character of the area. The road

¹⁹ PPG Reference ID: 41-004-20190509.

itself is one-way and mostly single vehicle width, with large areas of roadside parking adding to the congested feel of the area. The green space has no facilities for play but is doubtless used by children from the adjacent houses as a relatively safe play area. It is described in the GSSR, Part 2, reference number 18, as a residential amenity with the look of a village green, providing opportunities for socialising and as a visual amenity. As such, the designation as 'Open Space' is correct. As indicated previously, the statement of policy does not meet the requirements of NPPF, paragraph 16, insofar as duplication of national policy is concerned. In answer to the Examiner's questions, GTC has suggested a revised text for the Policy which, with some amendments, forms the basis for the proposed modification **PM9**. As amended, the Policy is in line with the guidance contained in the NPPF, particularly paragraph 104, and is in general conformity with local strategic planning policies. It meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy GS7 – Highway Verges

4.40 These are two triangles of roadside space on Thames Avenue/Severn Drive and Hutton Lane/Rectory Lane junctions (GSSR, Part 1, reference numbers 20 and 21). They appeared well-maintained at the time of my visit and provide a visual emphasis to the respective road junctions. They were identified as residential amenities in the RCBC Public Open Space Assessment Report, 2016. However no specific protection is provided by the RCLP Policy N3 Protection of Open Spaces. The spaces do make a positive contribution to the visual character of the residential areas, meeting the need for protection by designation as 'Open Space'. The Policy is consistent with Government advice in the NPPF, paragraph 104, and is in general conformity with the RCLP, specifically with Policy N3 Protection of Open Spaces. However, the statement of policy contained in Policy GS7 does not meet the requirements of NPPF, paragraph 16, and GTC has provided a suggested revised text in response to the Examiner's questions, which forms the basis of the proposed modification **PM10**. The amended Policy meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy GS8 – Amenity Spaces

4.41 Policy GS8 relates to three different amenity spaces, identified in the RCBC Public Open Space Report, 2016, but none have been given specific protection by RCLP, Policy N3 Protection of Open Spaces.

Spring Lodge Gardens

4.42 Spring Lodge Gardens (GSSR, Part 1, reference number 24) is a large cluster of modern detached houses set back from the Stokesley Road. There are three separate areas of open landscaped green space along the main road frontage and some substantial hedges giving some protection from road generated noise. The open areas are well maintained and give a special visual character to the residential development

Derby Road Cluster

- 4.43 The Derby Road cluster (GSSR, Part 2, reference number 29) comprises two areas of grassed space, one a square surrounded by houses, the other a triangle of wider roadside verge. Both are identified by the Open Space Report as residential amenity spaces. Neither are landscaped and their contribution to visual amenity is simply to provide a degree of openness to the area. From my visit, there was evidence that they appear to provide opportunities for local youngsters as kick-about areas.

Canvey Walk Green

- 4.44 This area is adjacent to the Derby Road cluster, located to the south of Dorset Road (GSSR, Part 2, reference number 33). It comprises a larger triangle of open grassed space alongside Dorset Road, with some evidence of landscaping, including quite mature looking Silver Birch trees. The houses on Canvey Walk are well set back from Dorset Road as a result of the open space, which gives a degree of visual amenity to the area, in addition to being a space for socialising.
- 4.45 For the reasons given above, the protection of these areas as 'Open Space' is appropriate and is consistent with Government advice in the NPPF, paragraph 104, and in general conformity with local planning policies contained in the RCLP. The final sentence of the Policy does not meet the requirements of the NPPF regarding unnecessary duplication of policies (paragraph 16). In response to the Examiner's questions, GTC has provided a revised text which, with some amendments, is the basis of proposed modification **PM11**. With this modification the Policy meets the Basic Conditions.

Factual and Minor Amendments and Updates

- 4.46 I have not identified any typographical errors in the text of the GCPNP that would affect the Basic Conditions. Minor amendments to the text and numbering (sections, paragraphs etc) can be made consequential to the recommended modifications, alongside any other minor non-material changes or updates, in agreement between RCBC and the GTC.²⁰

²⁰ PPG Reference ID: 41-106-20190509.

5. Conclusions

Summary

- 5.1 The Guisborough Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements. My examination has investigated whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for neighbourhood plans. I have had regard for all the responses made following consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, and the evidence documents submitted with it.
- 5.2 I have made recommendations to modify a number of policies and text to ensure the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum.

The Referendum and its Area

- 5.3 I have considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates. The Guisborough Civil Parish Neighbourhood Plan as modified has no policy or proposals which I consider significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary, requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond the Plan boundary. I recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Overview

- 5.4 The Neighbourhood Plan focuses on factors which draw people to come to the Parish to live, work or visit the area. The Plan also limits its attention to those matters which are not adequately covered by policies within the Local Plan. This reduces the areas of overlap and potential conflict with other local planning policies. My impression is that the approach has been carefully thought out, and the Town Council is to be commended for adopting a positive approach in collaboration with the Borough Council. The result is a Neighbourhood Plan which will add to and enhance the Local Development Plan.

Patrick T Whitehead DipTP (Nott) MRTPI

Examiner

Appendix: Modifications

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
PM1	Page 22	<p>Policy BE1</p> <p>Add the following text to paragraph 9.1.4 of the supporting text:</p> <p><i>“All these recent developments have been in line with RCBC Policy H2 – Type and Mix of Housing. This policy addresses housing needs across the Borough, but it was identified that Guisborough CP has an age distribution heavily skewed towards older age groups (see paragraph 5.5.17 above). Since the housing needs of the elderly are different from younger age groups, special regard should be given in future development applications.”</i></p>
PM2	Pages 23-24	<p>Policy BE2</p> <p>Add to paragraph 9.1.13 as follows:</p> <p><i>“For development proposals within the parish’s conservation areas, Policy BE2, criteria 1 and 2 give a local nuance to the requirements of RCBC’s Local Plan Policies HE1 and HE2, and such proposals should give due regard to the relevant Conservation Area Management Plan.”</i></p> <p>Combine paragraphs. 9.1.9 and 9.1.10 into one paragraph and add a new paragraph below Policy BE2 and renumber the paragraph.</p> <p>The new paragraph to read:</p> <p><i>“Policy BE2 should be read alongside the RCBC Urban Design Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document</i></p>

		<p><i>(SPD) and the Design of Residential Areas SPD.</i></p> <p>Include the maps showing the Parish's Conservation Area Boundaries.</p>
PM3	Page 25	<p>Policy BE3</p> <p>Amend the first sentence of the Policy as follows:</p> <p><i><u>"The design and standard of any All new development should aim to meet a high level of sustainable design and construction, such as and be including being optimised for energy efficiency, and targeting zero carbon emissions."</u></i></p> <p>Insert the following text ahead of the final sentence of paragraph 9.1.15:</p> <p><i>"Policy BE3 should be read alongside RCBC's Urban Design Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which provides guidance on sustainable building and design innovation and demonstrated true strategic leadership in low-carbon development. Paragraph 4.37 of the guidelines states "Energy use in buildings accounts for nearly 50% of UK carbon emissions. There is a duty on Local Authorities to secure a significant improvement in domestic energy efficiency across all housing tenures."</i></p>
PM4	Page 33	<p>Policy GS1</p> <p>Replace the final sentence of the Policy with the following text:</p> <p><i><u>"Development will not be supported unless the recreational use of the site will be enhanced or, the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current use."</u></i></p>

PM5	Page 34	<p>Policy GS2</p> <p>Replace the final sentence of the Policy with the following text:</p> <p><u>"Development resulting in the loss of the Branch Walkway will not be supported. Any proposal having a direct impact on the Walkway will not be supported unless it would result in enhancement of the existing facility."</u></p>
PM6	Page 35	<p>Policy GS3</p> <p>Replace the final sentence of the Policy with the following text:</p> <p><u>"Development resulting in the loss of the Rufford Close Link will not be supported. Any proposal having a direct impact on the Link will not be supported unless it would result in enhancement of the existing facility."</u></p>
PM7	Page 36	<p>Policy GS4</p> <p>Replace the final sentence of the Policy with the following text:</p> <p><u>"Development will not be supported unless an assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows:</u></p> <p><u>i) the allotments and buildings to be surplus to requirements; or</u></p> <p><u>ii) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better allotments in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location."</u></p>
PM8	Page 38	<p>Policy GS5</p> <p>Amend the Policy Title as follows:</p> <p><u>Policy GS5: Privately-owned Meadows Field next to the Sea Cadets hut</u></p> <p>Delete the second paragraph from the Policy and amend the first paragraph as follows:</p>

	<p><i>“The field next to Sea Cadets hut, which is defined in the Policy Maps in Appendix 1, is designated as ‘Open Space’ in recognition of its contribution to promoting biodiversity, providing local character and interest, and potentially providing a future healthy living recreational asset.</i></p> <p><i>It will be subject to the conditions of NPPF19 Paragraph 104— see paragraph 9.2.58 of this Neighbourhood Plan. Development will not be supported unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the field to be surplus to requirements or the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of size and quality in a suitable location. Due consideration should be given to the contribution the field makes to the character of the Conservation Area”.</i></p> <p>Add new <u>Policy LGS1 Chapel Beck Valley</u> as follows:</p> <p><i>“Chapel Beck Valley, which is defined in the Policy Maps in Appendix 1, is designated as Local Green Spaces in recognition of their meeting of the criteria laid out the National Planning Policy Framework for Local Green Space Designation (LGS). <u>This Local Green Space will be protected from inappropriate development unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated, or where development supports its role and function as Local Green Space.</u>”</i></p> <p>The supporting text at paragraphs 9.2.27 – 9.2.36 should be relocated with the new Policy LGS1.</p>
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	Pages 35–39	<p>The Parish Aspiration should be amended as follows:</p> <p>“Hutton Beck Meadows West <u>and Hutton Beck Meadows East</u>, which is <u>are</u> defined in the ‘Green Space Site Reports for Guisborough CP Neighbourhood Plan’ document, currently has a <u>have</u> live planning applications on it <u>them</u>, but would otherwise meet the criteria for LGS designation in the same way that Hutton Beck Meadows East does. If this <u>the</u> applications is <u>are</u> rejected, Guisborough Town Council aspires to submit appropriate evidence at the appropriate time through the Local Plan process for RCBC to designate Hutton Beck Meadows West <u>and Hutton Beck Meadows East</u> as Local Green Spaces.</p>
PM9	Page 40	<p>Policy GS6</p> <p>Replace the final sentence of the Policy with the following text:</p> <p><u>“Development resulting in harm to the character of the area will not be supported unless the open space can be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quality and social value to surrounding housing.”</u></p>
PM10	Page 41	<p>Policy GS7</p> <p>Replace the final sentence of the Policy with the following text:</p> <p><u>“Development will not be supported unless the resulting loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quality, aesthetic value and biodiversity in relation to surrounding housing.”</u></p>
PM11	Page 42	<p>Policy GS8</p> <p>Replace the final sentence of the Policy with the following text:</p> <p><u>“Development resulting in loss, in terms of quality, aesthetic value and</u></p>

		<u>biodiversity to surrounding housing will not be supported unless the benefits of the proposed development clearly outweigh the loss of the current use.</u>
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