

BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Full Council

Date of Meeting – Thursday 15 January 2026

Independent Examiner for Blyth Neighbourhood Plan

Part 2

Recommendation

The Council RESOLVE to agree:

that we are satisfied with the appointment of either Examiner due to their demonstrated knowledge, competence, qualifications, and experience and therefore leave the decision to the discretion of NCC.

Ward

Non specific

Risk Management

The responsibility for the appointment lies with NCC. The Examiner will ensure the Neighbourhood Plan meets Basic Conditions, minimises the risk of the plan being open to legal challenge.

Crime Prevention

Minimising legal challenge.

Objective

To ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan is examined fairly and transparently.

Report

Northumberland County Council (NCC) as the local authority is responsible arranging for the independent examination of the Blyth Neighbourhood Plan with the agreement of the Town Council.

NCC submitted a request to the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service provided by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in December, in anticipation of the work being required.

The neighbourhood plan examination is concerned solely with determining whether or not a plan meets the basic conditions set out in legislation. The neighbourhood plan examiner has no authority to determine issues that go to the merits of the plan.

We have been informed that three examiners have indicated that they would be suitable to undertake the examination of the Blyth Neighbourhood Plan.

This referral has been selected on the basis of their knowledge and experience in planning matters and the rigorous assessment programme required of all examiners on the NPIERS panel. The examiner will have demonstrated a depth of understanding, practical application and requirements of neighbourhood plans to a professional assessment panel within the sector.

NCC have reviewed the applications and have confirmed that two of the examiners meet the required criteria of independence, qualifications, and expertise. NCC would recommend either of the Examiners, both of whom have successfully examined several neighbourhood plans in Northumberland. Copies of the Examiner CVs are attached as Appendix 1.

Officers have reviewed the CVs and agree that both examiners have demonstrated their knowledge, competence, qualifications, and experience.

It is recommended that the Town Council agree that we are satisfied with the appointment of either Examiner, and leave the decision at the discretion of NCC.

It should be noted that the Neighbourhood Plan is still required to be publicised by NCC for a 6-week period (Regulation 16). NCC will also notify anyone referred to in the consultation statement that the plan has been received. Any representations received will be passed to the independent examiner for consideration.

E Brown
Deputy Town Clerk

8 January 2026