

Hartest Neighbourhood Plan 2024 - 2037

Post-Examination Decision Statement

Dated: 26 January 2026

Regulation 18 - Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

Summary

Regulation 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires the relevant local planning authority to decide what action to take in response each recommendation made by the Independent Examiner and to publish its decision. This statement fulfills that purpose.

The submission draft Hartest Neighbourhood Plan has been independently examined by Ann Skippers BSc (Hons) MRTPI FRSA FHEA AoU. Her final report was issued on 12 January 2026. It notes that the Plan is well presented, that it contains policies that cover a wide variety of topics, and that it seeks to add a layer of local detail. It also explains that, with some modifications, it will provide a clear and practical framework for decision making. Those modifications are few and are mostly of a minor nature. They include being consistent when referring to 'settlement gaps,' and ensuring that relevant maps show the identified 'important views.' Of note is a modification to delete the 'rear part of the proposed Local Green Space at the Crown Public House garden, because it was concluded that there is no physical demarcation or feature on the ground to indicate where this starts and ends.

Having considered the report, it is the District Councils recommendation that:

'Hartest Parish Council make all the necessary modifications to their Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the recommendations set out in the Independent Examiner's Report dated 12 January 2026. Subject to the satisfactory completion of that task; to be signed-off by the Head of Strategic Planning, this Plan will then be advanced to a local referendum covering the parish of Hartest.'

Background

The Hartest Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the relevant regulations. The key stages are set out below:

- In June 2014, designation of the whole parish as a Neighbourhood Plan Area, which enabled the Parish Council (the 'qualifying body') to prepare its Plan
- Publication of Regulation 14 pre-submission draft Plans in Spring 2017, Spring 2018, early 2021, and in late 2024. Consultation on the latter took place between 5 October and 18 November 2024



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- In early August 2025, submission of the draft Plan to Babergh District Council, which was then made available for public consultation between 26 August and 10 October 2025
- Commencing in November 2025, independent examination of the Plan. The final Examination Report was issued on 12 January 2026

The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). In order to satisfy them a 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 contained in the Development Plan for the area of the authority, *and*
- not breach and be otherwise compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.

Regulation 32 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) also prescribes the following basic condition:

- 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(7).

The 2024 Pre-submission draft Hartest Neighbourhood Plan was subject to independent screening. This concluded that an Appropriate Assessment was not required. After consulting the relevant statutory bodies on the screening outcome, the Council issued its formal Determination Notice in December 2024.

Decision

The Hartest Neighbourhood Plan 2024 - 2037 as amended to incorporate all of the modifications set out in the Independent Examiners Report dated 12 January 2026 complies with the Basic Conditions set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and should proceed to a local referendum.

The date of the referendum will be announced separately.

The referendum version of the Hartest Neighbourhood Plan, i.e., the version that incorporates all of the required modifications, will be published either on the day the referendum is announced, or sooner if it is practical to do so.

References:

1. Independent Examiners Report on the Hartest NP:

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/hartest-np-exam-report>