

SCOTFORTH RURAL NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**Supplementary Report to Lancaster City Council of the Independent
Examination**

By Independent Examiner, Tony Burton CBE BA MPhil (Town Planning) HonFRIBA FRSA

Tony Burton
tony@tonyburton.org.uk
September 2026

Contents

Introduction	3
Requirements on climate and nature	4
New Basic Condition on housing	5
Conclusion	5

Introduction

1. I was appointed by Lancaster City Council with the support of Scotforth Parish Council to conduct the independent examination of the Scotforth Rural Neighbourhood Development Plan. My final report was provided on 15 April 2026. It concluded that subject to the recommended modifications set out in the report the Scotforth Rural Neighbourhood Development Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements, including satisfying the Basic Conditions, and the modified Plan could proceed to Referendum.

2. As my report was finalised the provisions of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 amending the Basic Conditions and requirements for neighbourhood plans came into force on 25 March 2026. These require that:

- the making of the plan would not result in the development plan proposing less housing than if the draft plan were not to be made – replacing the previous Basic Condition that the making of the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan
- as far as the Qualifying Body considers appropriate and having regard to the subject matter of the plan, the Plan is designed to:
 - secure that the development and use of land in the neighbourhood area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change; and
 - take account of any local nature recovery strategy that relates to all or part of the neighbourhood plan area

3. The requirements in relation to Environmental Outcome Reports have not yet come into force as the regulations addressing the rules, technical standards, and specific outcomes have not yet been made.

4. Lancaster City Council resolved to address the change by consulting on an Addendum to the Basic Conditions Statement provided by Scotforth Parish Council which addressed the new requirements and Basic Condition. The six week consultation was undertaken between 6th July and 17th August 2026. Lancaster City Council requested that I undertake a supplementary examination of the revised Basic Conditions Statement and the

representations received. Eight responses were received from a range of development, infrastructure, community and local authority organisations and interests and I address these in my supplementary report as appropriate.

5. I have reviewed the Addendum to the Basic Conditions Statement in which *“Scotforth Parish Council, being the qualifying body, asserts that its Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is compliant with the new regulations and appropriately justifies that compliance”*. I note the support of Lancaster City Council, Bailrigg Village Residents Association, David Barton, and Robert Wilson for this conclusion.

Requirements on climate and nature

6. In addressing the new requirements relating to climate change and nature the Addendum to the Basic Conditions Statement draws particular attention to:

- Policy SR7’s support for high standards of sustainable design, including development in accordance with the support for sustainable design and climate change resilience in the *Scotforth Rural Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide and Codes*
- Policies SR3 relating to landscape character, SR4 relating to hedgerows, trees and woodland and SR5 relating to wildlife and biodiversity
- The fact that the Lancashire Local Nature Recovery Strategy was published on 16th January 2026 which was after submission of the Plan on 4th August 2025 and the period of public consultation between 2nd October 2025 and 17th November 2025.

7. Both Scotforth Parish Council and Lancaster City Council anticipate that the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy covering the neighbourhood area will be reviewed in the context of the new Lancashire Nature Recovery Strategy. Given the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy is referenced in Policy SR4 this provides a direct connection between the Plan and the Lancashire Nature Recovery Strategy.

8. The Addendum to the Basic Conditions Statement concludes *“that appropriate regard has been given to the amendments”* to the requirements for neighbourhood plans in

respect of climate and nature. No contrary representations have been received. I note that United Utilities “welcomes the recognition given to climate change mitigation and adaptation within the Neighbourhood Plan” and that Turley on behalf of University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust “raises no objection to the Parish Council’s assessment of the new climate change and Local Nature Recovery Strategy requirements”.

9. I conclude that the Plan meets the new legal requirements on climate and nature.

New Basic Condition on housing

10. In addressing the new Basic Condition on housing the Addendum to the Basic Conditions Statement summarises the conclusions of my main Examination report that Policies SR1 and SR2 are in conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan, including in relation to housing. My report includes recommended modifications to Policy SR2 where its drafting was unduly restrictive. Consequently the Addendum to the Basic Conditions Statement concludes that the Plan is in conformity with the new Basic Condition.

11. Representations from Lancaster City Council align with the analysis provided by the Addendum to the Basic Conditions Statement and conclude that “it is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan remains in conformity with the [new] basic condition”.

12. Representations from Turley on behalf of University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust reassert views expressed in response to the submitted Plan. These are considered and addressed in my main Examination report and no new issues are raised in respect of the new Basic Condition.

13. I conclude that the Plan complies with the new Basic Condition on housing.

Conclusion

14. Having reviewed the Addendum to the Basic Conditions Statement and considered the representations received I am content the Scotforth Neighbourhood Plan meets the new

requirements and Basic Condition and can proceed to referendum as recommended in my main Examination report.