

## **EXAMINER'S EXPLANATORY NOTE**

### **Informal meeting**

I have previously made it clear to the Over Hulton Neighbourhood Forum and Bolton Council that I had serious doubts about the ability of the submitted version of the Over Hulton Neighbourhood Plan to meet the “basic conditions” which would enable it to proceed to referendum, and thus to become part of the development plan for the area. Copies of the concerns I have raised, together with the parties’ responses, may be found on the Council’s website.

I am satisfied that, in its present form, the Plan would fail its examination. Under the relevant Regulations, it is open to me to complete my report on that basis. However, in order to be of assistance to the forum in particular, I have offered an informal meeting designed to ensure that the reasons for my assessment are fully understood, and to give the forum the opportunity to consider their next steps. Such a meeting is not specifically provided for in the relevant Regulations, but it is something which falls within the examiner’s discretion.

The meeting will be held in public, but active participation will be limited to representatives of the Forum (and their professional advisers if they wish) and the Council. Its scope will be centred on *procedural* issues, including the need fully to understand the role of independent examiners (which is defined both under the Town and Country Planning Acts and in established Government guidance and best practice): it will not involve consideration of any *substantive matters* which would be within the scope of any examination itself.

I will provide a written agenda on the day, and this will include a summary of the reasons why I consider that the Plan currently fails to meet the basic conditions.

Following the meeting, a note of proceedings should be published on the Council’s website.

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Independent examiner  
7 August 2024