Roughmoor Lane Planning Application. Timeline

Mendip Council agreed the [Local Plan Part II](https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/29760/Adopted-Local-Plan-Part-II/pdf/Adopted_Local_Plan_Part_II.pdf?m=637758570217000000) in December 2018 and submitted it for independent examination on 23rd January 2019 .

The housing and employment sites identified in the Plan were the result of three public consultation stages (Issues and Options in 2015, a parish consultation in 2017 and

formal pre-submission consultation in 2018. The Council also submitted to the inspector all the representations made by the public, organisations and agencies from 2018

and the environmental assessment work undertaken through the process. Following submission, the Inspector also held a consultation on the changes made since the 2018 version of the Plan.

The role of the Inspector is to test the soundness of the Plan as a whole against the criteria in National Planning Policy. The starting point for examination is that all the sites

are sound and acceptable and reasonable,  The Inspector is allowed to recommend modifications to  make a Plan  sound, but these changes are binding on the Council

Public examination hearings took place in July 2019 following an agenda and questions set by the Inspector in response to the objections made.  However, a key principle is that written objections carry as much value as those made in person.  After the hearings, the Inspector issued an ‘interim’ note in September 2019 outlining the additional areas of work and modifications.  This effectively confirmed that many of the policies in the Plan could be considered as sound with only limited changes. However, the Council was also requested to address the need for

additional housing allocations in the northeast of the district and other matters.

Both the major and minor revisions to the plan (known as Main Modifications) were published for public consultation in January 2020 with the responses
provided to the Inspector. A second round of virtual examination hearings on additional sites then took place in December 2020.

A further delay to the Inspector writing up his final report was the need for changes to include requirements for phosphate mitigation affecting the Somerset Levels and Moors

International wildlife sites. These more technical requirements and changes made from the second examination required a third consultation which took place in January 2021

The Inspector provided his final report on 2nd September 2021 – delayed in part as he had to take over work on a different local plan examination. The report confirmed the

Plan with his modifications could be adopted.

While the council could have reasonably expected an examination process to take 12-18 months from submission of plan, the controversial nature of the modifications, the requirements for consultation together with the  phosphates changes  and impact of covid on the planning inspectorate process all contributed to the extended examination .

Adoption is the final part of the process of confirming a development plan and effectively requires the council to accept the recommendations made by the Inspector.

There is no scope or process in legislation for the council to make further changes or review sites again.