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Paul Crysell, Inspector
c/o Christine Self

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www.dorsetforyou.com Text Relay calls welcome

Spatial and Community Policy Division
Spatial and Community Policy Manager
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Our Ref:

Date: 13 March 2014

Dear Mr Crysell,

West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan

Thank you for your letter of 3 February following the Exploratory Meeting. We have considered the options at length and taken legal advice, and as a result are strongly of the view that your remaining concerns can be dealt with. I am therefore writing to request a formal suspension of the examination in order to carry out further work on the assessment of housing needs. This has been agreed as our preferred way forward by Weymouth & Portland's Management Committee on 4 March and West Dorset's Executive Committee on 11 March.

We were encouraged by your indication that many of the issues raised prior to the meeting appear capable of resolution through the examination process, but recognise that further work on the housing need and supply evidence would assist your consideration of the soundness of the plan. We have considered at length the time required to undertake this, and been given assurances by all those that would be involved that we can meet the timescales required. This would avoid significant delay to the adoption of the plan, which as stated at the exploratory meeting is of great concern to us.

We have appointed Peter Brett Associates to undertake the work on the objective assessment of housing need: an initial set of scenarios is in preparation and further sensitivity testing will be carried out if required, to be completed by the end of April. Alongside this, my staff will carry out a review of the SHLAAs, to be completed in May. We propose to report to committees in June with conclusions of this work, and would be able to hold a consultation into the conclusions and potential changes to the plan over July and August, ready for a resumption of the examination in September. We would also allow time within this process for duty-to-cooperate discussions with adjoining authorities, and an independent consideration of the sustainability appraisal implications.

I hope that this proposal and timescale is satisfactory to you and that this can be agreed as a way forward, but please let me know if you have further questions.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Hilary Jordan
Spatial & Community Policy Manager