

Dear Ms Jordan,

I am grateful for your response to my previous letter of 19th July regarding a number of items on which I sought clarification. Rather than comment further on these matters I have been awaiting the outcome of the consultation process you undertook during September/October 2013 so that I could take account of the views of respondents to the further changes proposed to the Local Plan.

I am satisfied that some of my initial concerns can be resolved through the examination process but I have doubts about other matters which raise concerns about the soundness of the Plan and its compliance with legal requirements. I consider it would be helpful to discuss these with the Councils and others at an Exploratory Meeting in January 2014. The purpose of the Meeting is to determine how best to proceed and whether it would be sensible to avoid the time and expense of continuing with the Examination if it is likely that the Plan would be found unsound.

A preliminary agenda for the meeting is attached but I will provide more detail as soon as possible. (I would be grateful for an indication of potential dates for the meeting). I will expect the Councils to respond to each matter and indicate if and how it can be overcome. It is possible that I may have missed information which already covers these issues or that the Councils can provide a short paper explaining why my concerns are unfounded.

I am not expecting detailed rebuttals of each and every matter at the Meeting and should the Councils wish to consider these matters further after the Meeting, I would be prepared to allow sufficient time for them to do so although I would appreciate some indication of how long this might take. I would, however, welcome a brief note from the Councils before the Meeting setting out your broad position, without prejudice to any further comments you may wish to make.

The Exploratory Meeting should not be regarded as an opportunity to provide any formal evidence in respect of the Plan, nor would it be appropriate to examine policies or evidence in any detail. These would be matters for discussion at hearing sessions if the Examination were to proceed. Rather it should be seen as an opportunity for the Councils to suggest how my concerns could be addressed through modifications to the Submitted Plan and any additional work which might need to be undertaken.

There are four potential outcomes of the Exploratory Meeting:

1. Resolution of the matters allowing the Examination to proceed;
2. Suspension of the Examination process to allow further work and/or modifications to be undertaken;
3. Proceeding with the Examination without resolving the issues with the risk that the Plan could be found unsound;
4. The Councils decide to withdraw the Plan.

The Meeting will be open to the public and those who have made representations should also be notified.

Yours faithfully,

Paul Crysell
Inspector