



Basingstoke and Deane

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

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c/o Local Plan Programme Officer
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Our ref: JF/MR/PS/Exam/2/10

23 February 2016

Dear Mr Fox,

Proposed Modifications to the Submission Local Plan Consultation following the Local Plan Examination Hearings

Following the conclusion of the consultation on the proposed modifications to the Submission Local Plan in February 2016, I am writing to update you on the outcomes of the consultation and the council's decision on the need for further modifications. A number of documents are enclosed for your information:

- Statement of Consultation
- Summary schedule of issues raised and the council's response
- Schedule of further minor modifications

As outlined in the enclosed Statement of Consultation, approximately 400 representations were received from individuals, organisations and statutory consultees in response to the recent consultation. The council has carefully considered and responded to each of the representations received, as outlined in the enclosed summary schedules, including those that did not relate to a specific change. A small number of notable issues were raised and these are considered below.

Policy SS4 (Ensuring a supply of deliverable sites) and EM6 (Water quality)

Representations were received relating to the proposed modifications to policy SS4 and EM4. In particular, the Environment Agency, while supporting the modifications, suggested further amendments to provide greater clarity, including the removal of the word likely to deteriorate' from policy SS4.

The council understands that the Environment Agency's intention is to add certainty regarding actions to be taken if deterioration of band status is identified through monitoring. However, the council is keen to ensure that the policies act in a precautionary manner to ensure water quality is protected and band status is not breached. The council would not wish to see any change which suggests that action



would only be taken once the change in band status has occurred. Therefore, the council considers no further modifications to the policies are required. However, it is appreciated that in the context of the NPPF requirements, policies should be positive and provide clarity and therefore the council welcomes the Inspector's view on this issue via the forthcoming Inspector's Report.

Policy SS5 (Neighbourhood Planning)

Approximately 65% of representations on the proposed main modifications related to policy SS5 (Neighbourhood Planning) with a particularly high level of interest from residents in Bramley parish. Comments primarily related to the change of wording from 'approximately' to 'at least' for the levels of development identified for the 5 named settlements in the policy. Representations were also made regarding the requirement to identify sites/ opportunities to deliver at least 10 homes in and around each settlement with a defined Settlement Policy Boundary.

The proposed modifications reflect discussions held during the examination and the views of the Inspector. As outlined in council document MF15, the change to 'at least' has been made to promote flexibility and ensure that the neighbourhood planning figures are not considered as a ceiling for development. The use of 'at least' is common practice in Local Plans and should not equate to an unlimited amount of further development. The 'at least 10 homes in and around each settlement with defined Settlement Policy Boundaries' has been added to provide clarification regarding the location of the 150 homes requirement for those areas outside of the 5 settlements listed in the policy. Consequently, whilst the council is sympathetic to the concern that 'at least' does not represent clear guidance on housing numbers, it considers that the proposed wording is a suitable response to the need for flexibility.

Policy EP1 (Economic Growth and Investment)

A representation was received from Enterprise M3 stating that the proposed modification to policy EP1 did not go far enough as the development of additional sites for industrial and campus style B1 office uses should also be facilitated by the policy. The council considers that the proposed change is not justified, particularly in light of the fact that the modification to the policy was specifically made in response to the need for Storage and Distribution uses. There is already a considerable amount of vacant office space in the borough and rental values do not currently support speculative office development. Moreover, the NPPF directs offices to the town centre, and then edge of centre locations, where there is considerable capacity (in Basing View for example).

Conclusions

Having considered all the representations, the council is of the view that no further main modifications are necessary. However, a small number of further minor modifications are proposed. None of the further minor modifications significantly undermine the conclusions of the Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) and Habitats Regulations Assessment that has been undertaken. Whilst it is acknowledged that it is the council's decision to make minor

modifications, the council would welcome views on whether any of these changes should instead be categorised as a main modification.

The council has already requested that you recommend any main modifications necessary to enable the plan to be adopted. The council also welcomes consideration of the consultation representations and the council's response to them.

I hope you consider this way forward acceptable and the attached information meets your requirements. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further clarification.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jill Fisher'. The signature is stylized with a large, circular initial 'J' and a cursive 'Fisher'.

Jill Fisher
Policy Manager (Planning Policy and Infrastructure)