

**BASINGSTOKE AND DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL  
COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY SCHEDULE EXAMINATION**

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**BRIEFING NOTES**

**1 EXAMINER**

The Examiner is Louise Nurser BA (Hons.) Dip UP MRTPI.

**2 PROGRAMME OFFICER**

The Programme Officer [PO] is Joanna Vincent. She acts as an **impartial** officer of the Examination, under the Examiner's direction.

Details of **how to contact her** up to and during the examination hearings are set out at the end of these notes. Her principal functions are:

- to **liaise** with all parties to ensure the smooth running of the examination
- to ensure that all the **documents** received before the hearings are recorded and distributed
- to maintain the Examination **Document list**; and
- to **assist the Examiner** with all procedural and administrative matters.

She will **advise** on any programming queries. All practical and procedural points should be addressed to her. She will pass them on to the Examiner for a reply, if necessary, but carries her authority to act in accordance with the regulations.

**3 HEARING**

The hearing will commence at **10 am** on 5 September 2017 in the Civic Offices, London Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 4AH.

**4 SCOPE OF THE EXAMINATION AND EXAMINER'S ROLE**

This is to consider whether the Community Infrastructure Levy [CIL] Charging Schedule meets the requirements of the Planning Act 2008 and the 2010 CIL Regulations (as amended), in respect of **legal compliance and viability**.

The Examination will focus on viability. The charging authority should rely on evidence collected whilst preparing the schedule to demonstrate that it is viable. **Those seeking changes have to demonstrate why that is not the case.**

The process of examining a CIL Schedule is similar to development plans. The Examiner considers the viability of the schedule, having regard to the evidence available and representations submitted, rather than just objections made. The **process of examination hearings** is akin to a structured debate, with "round table"/"informal hearing" sessions addressing particular topics, rather than the form of a traditional public inquiry.

Following the closure of the hearing sessions, the Examiner will prepare a **Report to the charging authority** with conclusions and decisions as to the action it needs to take with regard to the viability of the schedule. This report is not binding on the

charging authority but it should amend the document accordingly, moving swiftly to formal adoption.

In terms of published documents, the CIL 2010 Regulations (as amended), and the online National Planning Practice Guidance (June 2014) should help interested parties with further understanding but there is also other advice available on the DCLG, PINS, and charging authority/Examination websites. Representors should seek advice from the charging authority or the PO if still not clear.

The charging authority is not expected to put forward any more substantive changes to the schedule. If, exceptionally, fundamental changes are proposed, the charging authority must fully explain and justify the reasons for the changes, with supporting evidence. It should also indicate the implications in terms of the viability of the schedule and ensure that they have been subject to the same process of financial appraisal, publicity and opportunity to make representations as the submitted version.

## **5 PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS FOR THE CHARGING AUTHORITY**

At the start of the Examination the charging authority will be asked formally:

Whether the charging authority can confirm that the Schedule has been prepared in accordance with:

- the statutory procedures;
- the Council's Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- the consultation requirements set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended);

and whether:

- it is supported by a financial appraisal; and
- there are any fundamental procedural shortcomings.

## **6 PROCEDURE PRIOR TO THE OPENING OF THE HEARING**

The Examination Hearing will be progressed in an **effective and efficient** manner, with a tight rein on the discussions and time taken. As part of that process the amount of written material should be limited to that necessary for the Examiner to come to informed conclusions on the issues. A **short, focussed** hearing should lead, in turn, to a short, focussed, report.

Those who have made representations on the Schedule within the relevant time period ["representors"] should have already decided whether their views have been adequately expressed in **written form** or whether they also wish to present them **orally** at a hearing session. Both methods will carry the same weight and the Examiner will have equal regard to views put orally or in writing.

Attendance at the hearing sessions will only be useful and helpful to the Examiner if participants can engage in a debate. **Anyone participating in a hearing session who wishes to prepare a statement of their position should provide the statement to the PO by Tuesday 22 August 2017 (12 midnight) at the latest.** Any such statement should be focussed upon the issues identified in the programme.

Those who wish to rely on their previous submissions need take **no further action**. However, if a representor wants to make a **further written submission** it must be **focused** on the issues identified for the relevant hearing sessions and submitted within the same deadline of **Tuesday 22 August 2017** or it risks being returned.

It would be helpful if the charging authority would respond in writing to any further representations with its own written statement on each issue, briefly setting out why it considers the Schedule to be viable in that respect and why the changes sought by other parties would not be acceptable. **Any such statement should be provided to the PO by Tuesday 29 August 2017 (12 midnight) at the latest.**

There is a list of **Examination Documents** (ED) on the website, available in the Examination Library or from the PO. These include the draft charging schedule, background papers and other documents that parties may wish to refer to.

Accordingly, participants should not attach extracts of these documents to statements as they are already Examination Documents and the Examiner will be familiar with them. **All such references should please include the document reference number.**

The Examiner also emphasises the need for **succinct submissions**, avoiding unnecessary detail and repetition. There is no need for quotes from the Schedule or other sources of policy guidance. Nonetheless, it is vital that the fundamental elements of cases are set out clearly but it is the quality of the reasoning that carries weight, not the scale of the documents or the weight of the appendices!

**Essentially, the Examiner needs to know the following** from those submitting further statements.

- What particular part of the schedule is unviable/unrealistic/unreasonable?
- Why does it fail?
- How could the schedule be made viable/realistic/reasonable?
- What is the precise change/wording sought?

Any further statements should be no longer than **3,000 words per issue**. Any submissions that are of excessive length and/or containing irrelevant or repetitious material may be returned.

Any plans or diagrams should be folded to A4 size and listed as **Appendices**.

**Additional statements or documents will not normally be accepted at the Examination Hearings.**

Any supporting material – **Appendices** to Statements – should be limited to that which is essential and not contain extracts from any publication that is already before the Examination, such as the Examination Documents and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Any Appendices should have a contents page and be **paginated** throughout and **tagged** at the side. They should also indicate which parts are particularly pertinent and are relied on to support the case made.

Any technical evidence should be limited to Appendices and also kept brief, with a

non-technical summary attached. Those of excessive length and/or which cannot be circulated electronically risk being returned.

## **7 THE EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS AND PROCEDURE**

The draft programme indicates that the hearing will last one day. However, a second day has been reserved if required.

A separate session will be held on **each issue** identified in the programme and all sessions are open to the public and the press to observe.

The sessions will take the form of **Round Table/Informal Hearing Sessions**, where several parties are present. This approach will provide an informal setting for dealing with issues, by way of a discussion led by the Examiner. There will normally be **no formal presentation** of evidence or cross-examination.

Those attending may bring professional advocates, but there is usually only space at the table for one representative of each group, organisation or company [apart from the charging authority], though there is no objection to the representative changing if notified to the Examiner and others present at the time.

Advocates/legal representatives take part as a normal participant/member of a team, rather than in a traditional advocate's role, as no cross examination or opening/closing statements will normally be permitted.

The discussion will focus **on the issues in the programme** and any additional points arising from the written submissions.

Those present will be asked to introduce themselves. The Examiner may then make a **brief statement** as to her understanding of the issues under discussion and then **invite participants** to make their contribution in response to the points raised starting usually, but not exclusively, with the charging authority.

The hearing will then progress with the Examiner drawing those present into the discussion in such a way as to enable her to gain the information necessary to come to a decision on the relevant matters. There should be opportunities within the discussion to ask questions of the other parties, with the Examiner's approval, and all involved may join in the discussion, when invited to do so.

## **8 SITE VISITS**

The Examiner will visit relevant parts of the charging areas, unaccompanied, if necessary.

## **9 CLOSE OF THE EXAMINATION**

Once all the information necessary to come to reasoned conclusions and decisions on the issues has been gathered by the Examiner, she will write the Report. The Examination itself **remains open** until this is submitted to the charging authority. However, once the hearing sessions part of the Examination is completed the Examiner can receive **no further information** from any party, unless it is a matter on which she specifically requests it. Any unsolicited material will be returned.

## 10 EXAMINATION PROGRAMME

The purpose of the issues listed for each session is **to focus attention** where the Examiner is seeking a fuller understanding of the comments and respective positions. If you think that a programme or issue **change** should be made, please inform the PO without delay, but with reasons, and the Examiner will consider it.

## 11 CLOSING REMARKS

The Examiner urges everyone to:

- make the best use of the remaining time before the start of the hearing sessions;
- ensure that the timescales and deadlines are adhered to, otherwise examination attendance may have to be rearranged or curtailed at best;
- be aware of the Examination Documents, the supporting evidence and any other relevant material produced by the charging authority; and
- **keep looking at the website** and/or contact the PO.

The Examiner looks forward to meeting everyone on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2017.

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