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Date: 6th August 2013

Our ref: PP5/5/20/RD

Your ref:

Mr Simon Emerson
Planning Inspector, Core Strategy Examination

SENT BY E-MAIL

Dear Mr Emerson

Re: New evidence and its availability for the Examination

In light of your note ID/36 the Council is writing to you on the issue of the publication of the more detailed studies on the Green Belt strategic locations being undertaken to inform the Placemaking Plan and their availability for the Core Strategy Examination.

The Council will be responding to the full range of issues raised in ID/36 by the agreed deadline of 13th September 2013. The response will set out the evidence on which the Council relied in selecting the chosen locations proposed for release from the Green Belt for development. The evidence enabled the Council and other interested parties to understand the key impacts of and reasons behind these proposed strategic development locations.

As you are aware, and as referred to in BNES/42, the Council is also in the process of preparing the Placemaking Plan, which is the Development Plan Document that will allocate precise sites for development and set out any further more detailed development requirements. In order to inform the allocation of the most suitable sites for development within the Green Belt locations outlined in the Core Strategy further more detailed studies are being undertaken. These studies will develop those undertaken to inform the Proposed Changes to the Submitted Core Strategy. They will enable the impacts of development, e.g. on the landscape or specific heritage assets, in different parts of the locations to be understood in greater detail.

The Council understands the Inspector's concern about evidence informing the Examination continuing to emerge in an on-going manner. However, plan preparation needs to proceed expeditiously in Bath & North East Somerset and the studies referred to in BNES/42 will need to be published for the Placemaking Plan process in any case. The Council is of the view that these studies would be very useful in informing the debate around the Green Belt locations at the Examination, should the hearings proceed beyond the 17th September. In order to avoid the piecemeal publication and release of the further studies listed in BNES/42 and to ensure all participants have sufficient time to take account of the

information contained within them, the Council's proposed approach is set out below.

The Council proposes that the studies listed in BNES/42 should be published together on 13th September. Their publication will be accompanied by a note outlining their implications for the Proposed Changes to the Submitted Core Strategy. This will also mean they are published and are available to all Examination participants alongside the Council's response to ID/36. Participants in the Examination will have the opportunity to review the studies and the Council's response to ID/36 during the lead up to you issuing questions for subsequent hearings in early October and in preparing their statements to be submitted in late October (around 6 weeks later). The Council is of the view that this gives participants sufficient time to review the more detailed evidence (that supplements existing evidence which informed the Proposed Changes to the Submitted Core Strategy) and to respond to it in preparing their statements.

Please will you consider the Council's proposed approach and advise whether it is acceptable to the running of the examination. The Council will then communicate the approach clearly on the Examination website.

However, please note that 'The Green Belt Review – Study of Additions to the Green Belt', undertaken to inform the Core Strategy and in response to the resolution of Council on 4th March 2013, has recently been published and will be sent to the Inspector. The recommendations of the study are that no additions to the south of the existing Green Belt boundary should be proposed in the Core Strategy.

In response to your further questions on the Examination hearing dates (emailed to the Council by the Programme Officer on 5th August) the Council is of the view that the current provisional programme enables sufficient time for the Council to consider its position on the way forward, should you conclude that you will not be able to find the Core Strategy sound after the 17th September hearing. Therefore, no delay is sought by the Council for this reason. However, you may wish to consider whether the programme for publishing detailed evidence relating to the Green Belt strategic locations proposed by the Council above affects the provisional programme. Should you wish to conclude the hearings this calendar year there would be scope to delay the programme by a week in respect of the final set of hearings, with the hearings on Green Belt locations potentially moving to 9th – 12th December.

Yours sincerely

Simon De Beer

Simon De Beer
Planning Policy & Environment Manager