

RESPONSE FROM THE INSPECTOR TO COUNCIL'S LETTER OF 6TH AUGUST 2013 REGARDING PUBLICATION OF FURTHER EVIDENCE STUDIES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR LATER HEARINGS

"I refer to the the Council's letter of 6 August 2013 concerning the publication of further evidence studies and the implications for any later hearings. I am grateful for your consideration of the matter and for setting out a clear suggested way forward.

I appreciate that the Council intends to publish various evidence studies to make progress with the Place-making Plan and it is not my intention to interfere with that process. I also recognise that, if published, the studies may well be referred to in this Examination by other parties, even if I had sought to restrain the Council from doing so. Given where we are, the most important points are: fairness to all parties to take account of any new material before having to draft any pre-hearing statements; clarity as to Council's position on them (including does it accept the conclusions of the evidence where undertaken by consultants; and do they change the Council's position in relation to the justification for the proposed changes or are revised changes needed); and my own position in not getting drawn into matters beyond the necessary/intended scope of the plan before me. As indicated in ID36, I will also still be mindful of whether this later evidence can support/justify the choices already made or whether the material is consequential to those choices. Your intended way forward should enable those matters to be achieved and I agree to your approach.

Given the various documents and Council explanatory notes to be published by 13 September, I consider that this would also be the most suitable time for the Council to clarify its position in relation to any consequences arising from the recent registration as a village green of land off Purlawent Drive, Weston for policy B3B (land adjoining Weston, SPC89). For example: does it affect the Council's view as to the potential to develop 300 dwellings; does it affect criterion j - access to the east, west, and south?

For the avoidance of any doubt by other parties, I would emphasise that none of the material to be published by 13 September is intended to be considered at the hearing on the SHMA on 17th September. The deadline of 13 September is so that I will have all relevant material in hand after the 17th, if the Examination continues.

I turn now to the timing of the later hearings. Although I have done much of the necessary preparation based on existing material I will now need a little more time to take account of all the new material to be published on 13th September in finalising my questions for pre-hearing statements if the other hearings are to take place. The 2nd half of September is, however, mainly occupied by other work commitments. I would like therefore to move back by one week the previously suggested programme. The revised timetable would then be:

10 October (at the latest) my questions issued.

31 October deadline for statements (I would consider a later deadline for specific matters to be dealt with in the last week of the hearings)

19 -21 November 1st group of hearings - mainly housing requirement and housing delivery

10 -13 December 2nd grp of hearings - all major Green Belt releases.

7- 9 January all remaining matters. (Although having these the week before Christmas would be neater in finishing the hearings, I do want the opportunity to undertake some draft reporting on the Green Belt locations immediately after those hearings given the complexity of the issues involved).

I would be grateful if the Council could indicate whether the above is acceptable in terms of availabilities, so that the matter can be confirmed soon. Thank you."

Simon Emerson
9th August 2013