

GUIDANCE NOTES TO CONSULTATION ON MAIN CHANGES TO SUBMITTED VERSION OF CORE STRATEGY and ASSOCIATED UPDATED EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENTS (August to September 2013)

Introduction

In September 2012 the Council submitted its Core Strategy, together with various supporting evidence and other documents, to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in preparation for an Examination in Public by the Planning Inspectorate.

As part of the process of submitting the Core Strategy in 2012 a number of proposed amendments to the Strategy were agreed and these proposed amendments were the subject of a period of public consultation to help inform the Inspector's considerations. From these consultation responses a set of Proposed Main Changes to the Submitted Plan have been made and these are a part of this consultation. The results of consultation on these proposed changes will be sent to the Inspectorate.

In addition, following the Submission of the Strategy, the Inspectorate requested that parts of the document's underlying evidence base required updating and the formal Examination was suspended pending this work. This work has now been completed and all the relevant updated documents are also presented for comment through this consultation. As with the Proposed Main Changes document above, any consultation responses to these documents will be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate to help inform the resumption of the Examination.

The overall purpose of the Examination will be to consider whether the Core Strategy, complies with a set of legal requirements and is "sound".

How to respond

1. Proposed Main Changes Document

Specifically in terms of the Proposed Main Changes document please use the dedicated Proposed Main Changes Comments Form (available from the Council's Consultation website link) however you may also respond using another method such as letter or email. Whichever method is chosen please read the following before completing your response.

2. Evidence Base Documents.

If you wish to comment on any of the updated evidence base documents then please either write or email using the relevant contact addresses on the Council's Core Strategy 2013 consultation website link. It would be helpful if you could identify which parts of which documents your comments relate to, for instance chapter headings or page or paragraph numbers.

Legal Compliance

The Inspector will consider whether the document meets the legal requirements under s20(5)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 before moving to the various tests of soundness.

You should consider the following before making a representation on legal compliance:

The Core Strategy should be within the current Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the key stages should have been followed. The LDS is the Council's programme of work setting out which DPDs it wishes to produce over a three year period. The Council keeps the LDS under review with updates published in the [Annual Monitoring Report \(AMR\)](#)

The process of involving the community in the development of the document should be in general conformity with the Council's [Statement of Community Involvement \(SCI\)](#). This sets out the Council's strategy for involving the community in the preparation and revision of Local Development Documents such as the Core Strategy.

The document should comply with the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England Regulations) 2004 (as amended, including the [amended Regulations of 2012](#) which came into force on April 6th). On publication the Council must publish the documents set out in the regulations and make them available at its principal offices and on its website. It must also inform all those bodies required by regulation and any persons who have requested to be notified.

The Council is required to produce a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) report to accompany the Core Strategy which will describe the process through which the SA has been carried out and the baseline information that has informed the process and its outcomes. SA is a tool for appraising policies to ensure that they best reflect social, environmental and economic factors. The addendum to SA has been updated, (see Addendum to the SA within the updated evidence base documents).

The Core Strategy will also have regard to the [Sustainable Community Strategy](#)

The Council has a duty to co operate on planning matters that cross administrative boundaries and in preparing the Core Strategy it needs to work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities are clearly considered.

In addition the document must have regard to the recently published [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#).

Tests of Soundness

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has recently amended the various soundness tests that existed within previous guidance. The current definitions of soundness are laid out in para 182 of the NPPF, which is set out in full below:

"The Local Plan will be examined by an independent inspector whose role is to assess whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, legal and procedural requirements, and whether it is sound. A local planning authority should submit a plan for examination which it considers is "sound" – namely that it is:

- **Positively prepared** – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- **Justified** – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;

- **Effective** – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.”

General Advice

If you wish to make a representation seeking a change to the Proposed Main Changes to the Submitted Core Strategy you should make clear in what way it is not sound having regard to the legal compliance checks and the four soundness tests outlined above. You should try to support your representation with evidence showing why the document should be changed. It would also be helpful if you could also say precisely how you think the Strategy should be changed. Representations should cover concisely all the information, evidence and supporting information necessary to support/justify your representation and the suggested change as there will not normally be a subsequent opportunity to make further submissions. Further submissions will be only at the request of the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he/she identifies for Examination at the Examination in Public of the document later this year.

The Inspector may choose to call people to present their views verbally in the Examination, though this is at the Inspector’s discretion. If you think that you would wish to participate in such a way then you should indicate this in Question 8 of the form.