

BRISTOL CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION

INSPECTOR'S EXPLANATORY NOTE REGARDING HEARINGS FOR 7/8 SEPTEMBER AND COUNCIL'S FURTHER DOCUMENTS.

1. As previously requested by me, the Council has published (23 August) a number of statements/documents. These are:

- i) Schedule of Potential Minor Changes;
- ii) Schedule of Potential Significant Changes;
- iii) Statement on Overall Housing Provision and the Green Belt (20/08/10)
- iv) Flood Risk Sequential Test Paper;
- v) Response to Inspector's Note of Matters Arising from Hearing Sessions.

2. These will all shortly be available to read on the Council's Examination webpage. This note seeks to guide all parties as to how these various documents are to be addressed.

Hearing session: 7/8 September

3. I will prepare an agenda to guide discussion for the resumed hearing. I hope this will be ready to be circulated to all intended participants by the end of the week. I expect to address all matters in one combined substantial hearing session, but I do not yet know how long the hearing will take.

4. It is important to bear in mind that the resumed hearing seeks to pick-up on those matters for which discussion was previously postponed, whilst taking into account subsequent changed circumstances. The intended participants are those parties who previously indicated that they wished to exercise their right to be heard in relation to my topics of overall housing provision and urban extensions and the Green Belt. The hearing session will however also encompass flood risk in relation to housing. In its new paper on flood risk the Council has responded to the steer that I gave as a result of earlier discussion on this topic and this has clearly had implications for the Council's assessment of housing delivery.

5. My starting point remains: *Is the Core Strategy sound as submitted?* The Council is proposing some significant changes in relation to housing provision. As explained previously, if I were minded to consider the submitted Core Strategy unsound and the Council's (or other changes) a potential remedy, any such significant changes would need to be the subject of formal consultation. I would take into account all new representations received from any party. Any such consultation would take place after the hearing on 7/8 September.

6. The potential significant and potential minor changes arising from the Council's revised approach are included in the 2 Schedules of Changes published by the Council. The hearing session on 7/8 September is not the place to make comments on the contents of these schedules other than those suggested changes which relate directly to the matters of overall housing, the Green Belt and flood risk.

7. A number of participants have asked the Programme Officer (PO) about rebuttal statements. The main opportunity for participants to respond to the Council's statements is through the discussion at the hearing and rebuttal statements are not sought. However, if the Council's hearing statements raise new matters on which participants wish to highlight technical/numerical points not previously set out, these should be put in a rebuttal statement to be

submitted to the PO by midday Friday 3rd September. My initial impression is that the Council's statements do not raise new technical matters.

8. The PO will circulate to participants for the resumed hearing the 2 Council statements directly relevant to the resumed hearing (Overall Housing Provision and Flood Risk Sequential Test Paper). All other material will be available on the Examination webpage including the statements of other participants.

Statement of Matters Arising from the Hearings

9. At the hearings in June, I indicated matters which required some further evidence or clarification and on which I invited the Council to consider possible changes. These comments were summarised in my note of 2 July (*Matters Arising from the Hearing Sessions*). The Council has explained what it has done in its response statement to my note, indicating its reasons for some of the changes or for not making changes. This note thus contains some new material or justification for the Council's stance. Participants may comment on this new material. Any comments should be received by the PO by **Friday 10 September**. I will take into account any comments received relating to the new material.

10. Some of the material referred to in the Council's response statement has already been circulated to relevant participants for comment in accordance with the indication I gave at the relevant hearing. The intended circulation of participants following the hearing on climate change and sustainable construction remains outstanding. I have been waiting for all the Council's material. The PO has now circulated relevant participants separately on this matter.

The Schedules of Potential Significant and Potential Minor Changes

12. These Schedules are not the subject of any formal consultation, but are the Council's response to matters arising from the hearings. I will take the Council's suggestions into account in considering whether any unsoundness could be overcome by changes.

13. If I proceed to invite the Council to undertake consultation on significant changes which I consider necessary for soundness, it is likely that a number of the matters that the Council has set out in the Minor Changes Schedule would need to be transferred to the Significant Changes Schedule, since they would materially alter how a policy may be interpreted and applied. I see no need to itemise these matters at this stage. I may need to amend the wording of some of changes.

14. Would the Council please provide (by 10 September) copies of the Spatial Area Diagrams and Key Diagram which incorporate all the changes indicated in the Schedules (and give each new Diagram a change reference no).

**Simon Emerson
Inspector
24 August 2010**