

BRISTOL CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION

INSPECTOR'S PROGRESS NOTE TO THE COUNCIL

1. The Council has now submitted a position paper on Overall Housing Provision, a revised position paper on Flood Risk Sequential Test and comments on the Government's proposed withdrawal of Circulars 1/2006 and 4/2007. Please ensure that these 3 papers and this note are added to the Examination webpage and clearly positioned to be seen as the most recent papers.

2. The Programme Officer has circulated the 2 position papers to participants at the hearing on 7 September (plus the Environment Agency) with comments requested by 28 October 2010. I will not know how I intend to proceed with the Examination until I have considered any responses.

3. Notwithstanding the above, in order not to delay the Examination unduly, I have undertaken some draft reporting on matters other than related to housing and covered in the above position papers. I hope by Monday 18 October to advise the Council of the changes that are needed to the Council's schedules of minor and significant changes and of any other changes I consider necessary (apart from housing and related matters). This will mostly involve moving existing proposed changes from the minor to the significant schedule.

4. I would want to be able to review the revised schedules before asking the Council to undertake any consultation on them (if that is how I decide to proceed with the Examination). If I am able to make my requests by 18 October, would the Council be able to provide revised schedules by 28 October? Without prejudice to my final assessment of the matter, these revised schedules should incorporate the revised wording for the Housing section of the Core Strategy and policy BCS5 set out in the new Position Paper.

5. On a point of detail, if I were to accept the Council's proposed changes to policy BCS5 on housing, I would want to see a clear and consistent approach both within BCS5 and between BCS5 and the area policies (BCS1 and BCS2 etc) for the figures for minimum provision and/or the aspirational figure (where used). Careful thought needs to be given to any words prefacing the figures eg *at least* where the figure is the minimum delivery expected and avoiding any unintended cap eg *up to*. Please make any necessary adjustments for clarity and consistency in the revised schedules I am seeking by 28 October. In making any revisions to the schedules the Council should not show changes to previous changes, but simply show how the text of the Core Strategy is proposed to be changed. The schedule of minor changes does not need to include the minor changes published at submission and which (with one exception) I have previously accepted as now embedded in the Core Strategy. These can however be retained as separately identified in the composite track change version of the text. Nor does the schedule need

to show paragraph number changes etc. These can be sorted out later. Omitting these matters will help simplify the minor changes schedule.

6. For any consultation the Council undertake, I would want the Key Diagram and Area Diagrams to be amended in accordance with the changes listed in the Schedules so that the position is clear. Again, I would want to see these before any consultation is undertaken and so you may want to put this work in hand, although I cannot guarantee that no other changes will be required. These new diagrams should each have a plan reference number. Could they be available by the 28th?

7. I appreciate that if I seek new changes, the Council will need to decide whether they are changes which it can accept or whether they will need to be listed in a new schedule of *Inspector imposed changes*. I do not expect this indication necessarily by the 28th, but I would want the position clear before any public consultation.

8. All the above is without prejudice to how I finally decide to proceed. Further revisions to the schedules may be needed in the light of all the evidence in relation to housing after 28th. I am conscious that the Council wants to be able to adopt a Core Strategy as soon as possible, and I am seeking to progress matters as far as I can now, bearing in mind that I will not be available to work on this examination between 2-12 November when I am undertaking hearings for the West Berkshire Core Strategy Examination. I cannot be certain at the moment when I would be able to confirm whether the Council should undertake public consultation and be able to finalise the content of the Schedules to be consulted on. I cannot see how it can be earlier than 19 November, even if I do not seek significant changes to the Council's position on housing. If there are any further changes to national planning policy of particular relevance I may need to canvass views.

9. Please let me know if the Council anticipates being able to revise the schedules between 18 and 28 October and of any other critical timelines it foresees. The Council can wait until it has sight of the required revisions on 18 October before doing so.

Simon Emerson
Inspector
12 October 2010.