

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL
Examination of Travellers Sites Development Plan Document

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INSPECTOR'S CLOSING COMMENTS

1. This note sets out the main matters that I covered in my closing comments at the hearing. The purpose of them was to give some indication of the next steps in the process and the likely timescales and an opportunity to deal with any procedural questions that the Council may have had. Nothing should be taken as pre-judging the contents of the final report which will take into account all relevant matters and representations.
2. There are various strands that can proceed concurrently during this part of the examination.
3. Firstly, the Council and its consultants undertook to respond to the Outstanding Matters raised by Highways England in Annex 1 to its letter of 21 May 2018 (PS12). This is concerned with access arrangements for proposed allocation TS3 – temporary stopping place at Leominster. Some further informal dialogue is also likely to be required with Highways England to ensure their concerns are fully understood. In addition, the Council undertook to give further consideration to matters I raised regarding visibility to the south and potential conflict with traffic leaving the roundabout. It is expected that an updated risk assessment to PS8 should be completed by Friday 1 June and forwarded to Highways England for further comment. In turn, these should be made within 40 working days. The Council should keep me informed of progress in this regard and publish any further documents on the webpage.
4. At the same time I will need to give further consideration to the points that emerged during the discussion relating to the scope and purpose of the plan, whether the assessment of need for traveller pitches is justified and whether future supply would be adequate. These substantive points may require my input at this stage to indicate whether there is potential unsoundness, to suggest any revisions that might ensure soundness or to identify any further work that is required to this end. This advice will give the Council an opportunity to consider what further changes, if any, should be put forward and is intended to be helpful. However, it is ultimately for the Council to decide if it wishes to take any further action and to review the available alternatives. This advice to the Council should be completed by **Friday 15 June**. This letter will be publicly available and published in the normal way.
5. The Council has prepared schedules of proposed minor changes as A17 and PS9. Further matters were identified during the hearing which the Council

will give further consideration to. As part of this process the Council will need to distinguish between Main and Additional Modifications. Additional Modifications are those that (taken together) do not materially affect the policies of the Plan and Main Modifications can be taken to be those that do materially affect the policies. They will therefore generally comprise any changes to the policies themselves or to the supporting text which has a significant bearing on the interpretation of that policy. In due course any proposed Main Modifications to the Plan would need to be the subject of consultation for a minimum of 6 weeks.

6. However, whilst the Council could progress this schedule now, my advice is that this is deferred until after my letter referred to in paragraph 4 has been received. At that stage, if necessary, I will give further guidance about progressing proposed Main Modifications.
7. More generally my report will only be finalised after I have given consideration to any responses to any Main Modification consultation. At the moment it is difficult to be definite about when this will be produced but I expect it would be about 6-8 weeks after the close of the consultation period. A firmer date will be given nearer the time.
8. To conclude can I thank the Council and others who attended for their verbal and written contributions to the examination. Also to record my personal appreciation for the very efficient work that Tracy Pearson has done as Programme Officer.

David Smith

INSPECTOR

24 May 2018