

Louise St John Howe
Programme Officer

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12 October, 2018

Ms. Hannah Quarterman,
Hogan Lovells International LLP Atlantic House
Holborn Viaduct
London EC1A 2FG

Dear Ms. Quarterman,

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2013-2032)
Public Examination
Inspector: Melvyn Middleton BA(Econ) DipTP DipMgmt

I confirm receipt of your letter to Mr. Middleton dated 8 October, 2018 which the Inspector has asked me to reply to on his behalf.

The hearing in November is about the Green Belt Review methodology and findings and is not an opportunity for a general discussion about the way the Council should proceed. The Council has not yet decided what any revised approach to the Green Belt might be, or what process to adopt to achieve this and any revisions that might be required to its strategy.

Once the Council has resolved how it wishes to proceed in the context of the Green Belt, and following on from that, what amendments it wishes to make to its strategy to make it sound, then there will be further consultation about the soundness of the Local Plan. The consultation could either be a separate exercise or as a part of main modifications, but the Inspector has asked me to stress that until then third party opinion about these matters via the Examination would not be helpful.

At the hearing sessions in November, the Inspector will not be inviting discussion about individual sites. As at the earlier hearing sessions in the Examination, individual sites should not be referred to other than as an example and not by the promoters of the site.

The Inspector has received extensive comments from over 50 respondents about the review and considers that all of the main points that could affect soundness have been extensively covered in these submissions. In the Inspector's view inviting further comments from respondents would not assist the debate. Those who will be taking part in the Hearing will be able to refer to their submissions, as well as those from other parties where appropriate.

The Inspector has received the letter that you refer to from the Council. He will be responding to this in due course, and following this the full correspondence will be placed on the website. However, other than advising where the approaches could have ramifications for soundness considerations, it is not part of the Inspector's remit to tell the Council how to prepare its plan or what strategy it should advance.

The letter contains nothing that is not already in the public domain. Your letter is clear evidence of this and the delay in its publication will therefore not prejudice anyone. It is possible that there will be discussion between the Council and the Inspector at some point during the November Hearings about these matters and the way forward, but that will depend upon the progress made through written exchange in the meantime. However, as this is a matter of process, rather than soundness, it is not a subject that is appropriate for public debate in an Examination.

Consequently, if you have points that you would like the Council to take into account when considering the appropriate way forward, these should be communicated to the Council.

Both your letter and this response will be posted on the examination pages under the examination documents tab with the reference numbers EX90A and EX90B respectively.

Yours sincerely,



Louise St John Howe
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Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Examination