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**Colin Haigh**  
**Head of Planning**

Reply to: address as below  
Date: 7 January 2020

Melvyn Middleton  
Planning Inspectorate  
c/o Programme Officer  
[louise@poservices.co.uk](mailto:louise@poservices.co.uk)

Dear Sir

### **Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Examination**

I write in respect of on-going correspondence about the timescale for our Local Plan examination.

Following the hearing sessions earlier that took place last month I would like to confirm the following dates:

I anticipate that you will draft agenda and questions in early January 2020 in preparation for hearing sessions on the southern part of Birchall Garden Suburb and Symondshyde in late February / early March 2020.

Officers will publish their officer report and associated documents after the briefing session, probably on Wednesday 8 January 2020.

At the request of some councillors and examination participants we agreed at a Cabinet Planning & Parking Panel (CPPP) meeting some months ago that we would publish the officer report and associated documents at least two weeks / 10 working days before the item is debated by the Panel. This doubles the normal time period set out in our Constitution of 1 week / 5 working days. We will be publishing a considerable amount of material and I consider that it is valid to give everyone time to read and digest it before making any decisions on its content.

Cabinet Planning & Parking Panel (CPPP) at 7:30pm Thursday 23 January 2020 with an expectation that councillors will discuss results and recommendations in the officer report.

Cabinet Planning & Parking Panel (CPPP) at 7:30pm Wednesday 29 January 2020 with an expectation that councillors will decide which new sites to select for public consultation.

In respect of the two CPPP meetings above, councillors have observed that they and members of the public will be presented with a lot of evidence, site analysis and site recommendations and have requested one meeting to hear from officers and debate what they hear, a gap of time to think carefully on what they have heard, and a second meeting in the following week to make their final decisions.

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Cabinet at 7:30pm Thursday 30 January 2020 with an expectation that councillors will authorise sites selected by CPPP for public consultation.

For information, there is no need for a Full Council meeting. This was necessary if we were to submit sites directly to the examination, but not now we intend to issue sites for public consultation, as our Constitution states that Cabinet is allowed to authorise local plan documents for consultation.

Officers will seek to update all previously discussed main modifications and provide them to you by late January 2020.

This gives officers a few days to make any changes that may be agreed by CPPP and/or Cabinet, to print any additional consultation material and to transport all of the necessary consultation material to deposit points at libraries and parish council buildings around the borough. Public consultation will start on Monday 10 February 2020 at the latest and run until Sunday 22 March 2020 at the latest, in order to finish before local election purdah starts in the week commencing 23 March 2019. We do not wish for the plan to be judicially challenged on the basis that we have not complied with our Statement of Community Involvement.

Officers will arrange hearing sessions for late February / early March 2020 to consider the southern part of Birchall Garden Suburb and Symondshyde Village. I will write to you as soon as possible to confirm these dates.

Local Elections will take place on 5 May 2020.

Officers will analyse and summarise all representations to the public consultation exercise as quickly as possible, so that you can draft your agenda and questions for hearing sessions in June 2020. I should acknowledge however that the Council received 10,200+ representations to the call-for-sites consultation exercise and therefore expects to receive a large number of representations to this public consultation exercise. We will look at all possible ways of resourcing this stage of the process.

Officers will arrange hearing sessions in June 2020 to consider remaining submitted sites and new sites. I will write to you as soon as possible to confirm these dates.

Once again we are very grateful that you recognise the challenges of making difficult long-term decisions in a transparent and democratic manner and continue to adopt a pragmatic approach to progressing the examination.

Yours sincerely

Colin Haigh  
Head of Planning

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