

**Re: Draft Basildon Borough Local Plan 2014-2034**

*My letter of 23 March 2021 requested that consultation on the submitted draft Basildon Borough Local Plan 2014-2034 (the submitted Plan) as modified by the Basildon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy 2020, the Housing Topic Paper, the updated housing land supply calculations, and the revised GTAA, alongside the other new evidence now relied upon, be carried out in advance of Hearings. I have been informed by the Programme Officer that at a meeting of 27 January 2022, the Full Council decided to defer a decision on whether to carry out that consultation to a special meeting of Full Council on 10 February 2022.*

*I think it might be helpful for me to make clear, in a formal way, that the consultation referred to in my letter of 23 March 2021 is not a mere suggestion. Rather, it is necessary for the examination of the submitted Plan to proceed. The reason I require it is to ensure that everyone with an interest in the submitted Plan has a full and fair opportunity to make their views known, so that I can take them into account, and proceed to Hearings on that basis. To deny people that opportunity would be unfair and compromise the integrity of my examination. That is an outcome I will not allow.*

*If the Full Council makes a decision not to proceed with the consultation I require, then I will be unable to continue with the examination. In those circumstances it would not be possible to reach a position where the Council can adopt the submitted Plan. Consequently, there will be two options – either: (1) the Council withdraws the submitted Plan; or (2) I proceed to write a report on the draft Plan as submitted, explaining the circumstances and that the draft Plan cannot be found sound because it has not been possible to examine it. I would strongly recommend the former course.*

*Given that a significant period has passed since I asked for this consultation to be undertaken, the Council should now reach a conclusion on this matter one way or the other, in order to end the uncertainty.*

*If you require any further clarification, then I will, of course, be happy to help.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Paul Griffiths*

**INSPECTOR**