

# Bassetlaw Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD - Public Examination

*Address for*

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Mr R Schofield  
Planning Policy &  
Conservation Manager  
Bassetlaw District Council

By email

Date: 17 February 2011

Dear Mr Schofield

## **EXAMINATION INTO THE SOUNDNESS OF THE BASSETLAW CORE STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES DPD**

As you will be aware Christopher Anstey BA(Hons) DipTP DipLA MRTPI has been appointed as the Inspector to hold the above-named examination. The Inspector has requested that I write to you at an early stage about various matters

### *Matters requiring clarification*

The Inspector has had an initial read through of the submitted Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD, the background documents and the representations. He would value your brief comments on the following matters raised in the representations. In the Council's responses he asks that consideration is given to whether any of these matters involve soundness issues and could lead to the Council undertaking further work and/or proposing changes to the Submission DPD.

*1. The policies for Worksop, Retford and Harworth-Bircotes concentrate most of the District's growth in these settlements and refer to sustainable urban extensions. However sustainable urban extensions are not defined. Broad locations for growth are not identified nor are any strategic sites. It is unclear as to whether the focus will be on previously developed land or greenfield release. There does not appear to be a set of criteria that would guide the site selection process for development in and around these settlements. Without clearer direction it could be argued that critical decisions are being delegated to the Site Specific Allocations DPD.*

*2. The housing and employment requirements as set out in the settlement policies are expressed in percentages rather than actual figures. Furthermore it is not apparent how the percentages have been derived. Can this approach be justified and is it in line with national policy?*

**Inspector: Mr C Anstey BA (Hons) DipTP DipLA MRTPI**  
Programme Officer: Carmel Edwards B Lib (Hons) MCLIP

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3. *There is limited reference in the DPD as to when and where new development will occur over the 15 year plan period. There is no housing trajectory covering the plan period in the DPD or consideration of housing provision in the first 5 years of the plan and beyond. The housing figures imply that in the short-term most new housing development will take place in Retford with far less in Worksop. Is this the case? Certain representations question the housing figures. Is there any intention to resolve this and agree a common set of figures?*

4. *There is little mention of what physical, social and green infrastructure is required in association with the development proposed or who will be responsible for its provision. Again national guidance stresses the importance of infrastructure delivery.*

5. *The relationship with the Proposals Map is unclear and not explained. As a result there is uncertainty as to what parts, if any, of the Proposals Map are relevant. For instance are the Development Boundaries being reviewed and/or changed? Policy DM3 refers to Development Boundaries. Are the boundaries and status of protected areas to be determined as part of this DPD?*

Please be assured that the Inspector is not suggesting in any of these queries that the Core Strategy is necessarily flawed. However, he considers that these are matters that would benefit from early consideration, ahead of the hearing sessions. He would appreciate your views on these matters by Friday 25 February.

### *Programme*

Until the Inspector has had the opportunity to consider your responses to these matters it would be premature at this stage to arrange specific dates for the hearings. However the Inspector has asked me to set out his preliminary thoughts on the programme. It is difficult to be precise at this stage as to how many hearings are likely to be required but it is estimated that they will extend over 2 weeks. In view of this a Pre-Hearing Meeting (PHM) is likely to be necessary. Over the next few weeks I will endeavour to identify those who wish to attend the PHM and the hearings. This will help to further structure and determine the likely duration of the hearings.

### *Referencing of Representations*

According to the Regulation 30(E) Consultation Statement there are 293 duly made representations from 74 respondents. I am well on the way to producing a suitably referenced schedule of representations on each policy/paragraph of the DPD. This is essential for the smooth progress of the Examination. The Inspector informs me that the original copy of the representation will suffice for his purposes.

### *Changes*

The Inspector notes that the Submitted DPD is the same as the Publication DPD and that a Schedule of Proposed Minor Changes has been prepared. Is the Council meeting with any representors to resolve any

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outstanding soundness issues and if so is there an anticipated timescale?  
Will statements of common ground be produced?

### *Additional work/Inspector's Questions*

The Inspector may ask for specific topic papers on certain matters. Generally, however, he will endeavour to secure the information and material required by way of questions posed during the Hearings. These questions will be circulated prior to the Hearings, ideally in draft form at the PHM. Has the Council produced any written responses to the representations received?

### *Examination Web-page*

I am in the process of setting up a dedicated web-page on the Council's web to include my contact details, the name of the Inspector, key dates, list of core documents, copies of the representations, and any material produced by the Council, representors, the Inspector and myself.

### *Representation*

Who will be representing the Council during the hearings? Will any witnesses with special expertise (e.g. affordable housing, housing/population forecasts, infrastructure etc.,) appear on the Council's behalf? Will there be any legal representation?

### *Advisory visit*

Can confirmation be given that the Council did not have a LDF Front-Loading Visit from The Planning Inspectorate?

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely



C K Edwards  
Programme Officer

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