



The Planning Inspectorate

Examination of the Remitted Part of the Salt Cross Village Area Action Plan (AAP)

Inspector Helen Hockenhull BA (Hons) B.PI MRTPI

Chris Hargraves
Planning Policy Manager
West Oxfordshire District Council
Woodgreen
Witney
Oxfordshire
OX28 1NB

22nd April 2024

By Email

Dear Mr Hargraves,

Examination of the Remitted Part of the Salt Cross Village Area Action Plan (AAP)

1. Thank you for your letter of 2 April 2024 addressed to Mr Giles in the Local Plans Team seeking guidance on the way forward following the successful legal challenge in respect of Policy 2 of the Salt Cross Village AAP.
2. As you know, the order of the Court dated 4 March 2024 quashed the Inspectors' report and Main Modifications insofar as they relate to Policy 2.
3. I have been appointed to reopen the Examination and examine the Remitted Part of the AAP. The scope of the examination is constrained by the Order of the Court. It will only consider Policy 2 and any other consequential revisions to the Plan. No other matters or policies will be examined.
4. For clarity, the starting point for the reopened Examination is Policy 2 as originally submitted at Regulation 19 stage. It will be necessary to consider Policy 2 in light of the legal challenge and the Government's Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update in the Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) dated 13 December 2023.
5. It appears to me that the work required will entail the following:
 - Main Modifications to Policy 2;
 - Any consequential modifications to the AAP;
 - Evidence to address the criteria in the WMS including an update to the draft AAP Financial Viability Appraisal and consideration of the impact on housing supply and affordability;

- Update to the Sustainability Appraisal.

I would be grateful for confirmation of the scope of the work the Council intends to undertake and the anticipated timeframe.

6. I suggest that once completed, this work be submitted to me for my consideration and to enable me to prepare Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQ's). The MIQ's will then be published and consulted on for a period of 6 weeks. This will enable all stakeholders and representors to provide their response and submit Hearing Statements.
7. The next stage would be for a Hearing Session to be held. I would anticipate 1 to 2 days, but I will keep this under review as the Examination progresses.
8. Following the hearing any further Main Modifications that may be necessary will need to be consulted upon for a period of 6 weeks. I will then prepare a report on the Remitted Part of the AAP containing my recommendations.
9. In consultation with the Council, I will prepare a more detailed timetable in due course. A Programme Officer should be appointed as a matter of urgency (if the Council has not already done so). Please can their contact details be provided to me as soon as possible.
10. In the interim, it would also be helpful if the Council could set up a separate web page within the Examination website for the Remitted Part of the AAP. A separate Examination Library for the reopened examination should also be set up. By way of background, and to assist me to understand the issues previously raised, this should include all the representations made in respect to Policy 2 at the Regulation 19 stage, the previous Hearing Statements, any representations made at Main Modifications stage and any other documents or evidence the Council considers to be relevant to Policy 2.
11. I would be grateful if the Council could respond to this letter to confirm agreement to the way forward as suggested. Should the Council have any queries or require further information please contact me through the Programme Officer (assuming one has been appointed) or through the Local Plans Team at the Inspectorate.
12. A copy of this letter should be placed on the Examination web page for the information of all those following the progress of the examination.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hockenfull

INSPECTOR.