

**PLANNING INSPECTORATE &
LONDON BOROUGH OF BARNET COUNCIL**

LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION - INITIAL LOGISTICAL MEETING

17 JUNE 2022 - 10:30AM (via MS Teams)

POST MEETING SUMMARY NOTE

Attendees

Gareth Wildgoose - Inspector

Mark Philpott - Inspector

Ian Kemp - Programme Officer

Nick Lynch - London Borough of Barnet Council

Rita Brar - London Borough of Barnet Council

Ngaire Thomson - London Borough of Barnet Council

Rish Mehan - London Borough of Barnet Council

Frances Odikasigbue - London Borough of Barnet Council

Purpose of the meeting

1. The meeting was held specifically to discuss procedural arrangements for the forthcoming hearing sessions, including technical matters in relation to Council updates on progress with Inspector requests, familiarisation visits/test events, the Examination library and other related subjects. As such it was a purely logistical meeting to assist the efficiency of the Examination process. No discussion of any aspect of legal compliance or soundness of the Plan took place.

Update on document production and actions arising from the Inspectors' letter of 18 May

2. In response to the Inspectors' request for updates, the Council confirmed the following:
 - Technical paper - sites in strategic policies (Policies BSS01, GSS01-13) and the proposed allocation of sites listed in Annex 1 of the Plan: The Council is on schedule to meet the expected deadline of 23 August 2022.
 - Up-to-date site by site trajectory: The Council is on schedule to meet the expected deadline of 23 August 2022.

- Schedule of Main Modifications: The Council is on schedule to meet the expected deadline of 20 June 2022 and the document is currently awaiting internal sign off.

Response: The Inspectors advised that the deadline for receipt of the Schedule of Main Modifications is particularly important as sufficient time will be required to take account of its content before finalising and publishing Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) in advance of the hearings.

- Policies Map: The Council confirmed that the preparation of a hard copy of the proposed Policies Map has been a difficult task due to changes to the base OS map amongst other issues. The 2012 version of the Policies Map is likely to be submitted in the next couple of weeks to supplement the online version, and further work will then be undertaken on the map to reflect the proposed changes in the Plan.

Response: The Inspectors suggested that the Council accompany its submission of the Policies Map with a written note explaining issues with the base OS map having changed, etc. The Council should keep the Programme Officer updated regarding progress on this matter, with the aim to have hard copies in place well in advance of the start of the hearings.

- HRA Screening Opinion Update: The Council confirmed that liaison with Natural England is ongoing and that the document is likely to be submitted in the next 1-2 weeks.

Response: The Inspectors re-iterated the urgency of ensuring that this document is provided as soon as possible and added to the Examination library with other documents.

- Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs): The Council confirmed ongoing progress, with SoCGs nearly agreed with Hertsmere, Hertfordshire County Council and various Infrastructure providers. The SoCGs with the Environment Agency and National Highways have been held up by resourcing issues of those organisations. Preparation of SoCGs with other bodies beyond those stated is not being undertaken at this time.

Response: The Inspectors emphasised the need to keep working towards finalising the SoCGs and discouraged the submission of 'draft' SoCGs given that they would remain subject to change and therefore could be misleading.

- Formal response to Inspectors' letter dated 18 May 2022: The Council confirmed that there had been unforeseen delays to publication on the Examination website of the formal response dated 27 May 2022. The response indicated an agreement to proceed with the Inspectors' requests. It will be uploaded to the website as soon as possible.

3. The Inspectors also requested:

- An updated Signposting Document to be added to the Examination library by the end of July at the latest, but ideally as soon as possible. It should

clearly state when documents have been added to the library and should be added as an Examination document below its previous versions, and;

- The Council to check the Plan to ensure that all documents referred to within it are in the Examination library as soon as possible and well in advance of the deadline for hearing statements to be submitted. Ideally, the details of any documents added should be incorporated within the updated Signposting Document.

Arrangements for hearings

4. The Council confirmed that their preference is for in-person hearings at Hendon Town Hall. Committee Rooms 1 and 2 are of a capacity that typically allow for up to 20 participants per session and can also accommodate around 30 observers. The Council also indicated that there are no issues with potential dates of hearings during late September/early October (Stage 1) and late October/November (Stage 2). The Council agreed to follow up with confirmation of room bookings during week commencing 20 June 2022 and will continue to liaise with the Programme Officer regarding hearings arrangements.

Response: The Inspectors confirmed that both rooms will need to be booked at least between 9am and 5pm each day. The Council should also inform the Programme Officer if there are any committee meetings scheduled for evenings, so that the sessions can be programmed accordingly.

5. The Inspectors clarified that as mentioned in the letter of 18 May 2022, Stage 2 proceeding in late October/early November is contingent upon the Inspectors' views at the end of Stage 1 that it would be the most effective manner to progress the Examination. For the avoidance of doubt, it is the Inspectors' intention to progress to Stage 2 hearings in October/November 2022 if reasonably possible. However, there is a possibility of a postponement should significant issues necessitating further work remain following Stage 1. The Inspectors would give advance warning and seek the Council's view at the earliest opportunity if it were to be considered that the Stage 2 hearings would not be able to proceed as provisionally planned.

Virtual contingencies

6. The Inspectors are considering whether it would assist the ability of participants to exercise their right to be heard, to include either virtual participation (if feasible) or a dedicated virtual hearing session as part of the programme. The latter option would likely be at the end of the second week of Stage 1 and/or at the end of Stage 2/closing if pursued.
7. The Council have recently hosted a CIL Examination with a virtual component and suggested two potential options for hosting virtual events, either MS Teams Live or a MS Teams meeting with invited participants.

Response: The Inspectors' and the Programme Officer advised that in their experience MS Teams Live is not suitable for roundtable style discussions and therefore, an MS Teams meeting with invited participants would be the only potentially suitable option. The Programme Officer also raised that the Council is currently unable to livestream events and therefore further work needs to be done in advance of any virtual test/familiarisation meeting to establish whether the Council can record the event and upload this to the Council's website. The Council officers/support team were, therefore, tasked with investigating the hearing venue/virtual capabilities ahead of any familiarisation session and that they speak with their GDPR officers regarding recording arrangements.

Venue familiarisation and/or test event(s):

8. The Inspectors confirmed that a final decision on the level of any virtual participation would only be made after considering the suitability of the arrangements in place at a familiarisation session at the venue on 16 August 2022 to see how arrangements may work in practice. The Inspectors advised that such sessions usually take around half a day and that, therefore, the venue should be booked at least between 10am and 1pm and asked the Council to make the necessary arrangements and confirm them via the Programme Officer as soon as possible. In addition, the Inspectors indicated that a further virtual familiarisation session may be needed in early September before the start of the hearings, although this would be confirmed via the Programme Officer in due course.
9. Separate from the above, the Inspectors advised that if a virtual component or contingency sessions were to be included in the programme, there is also likely to be a need for an additional test event for Inspectors in early September and a separate familiarisation session for virtual participants during the week before the hearings. The latter session would be informal and run by either the Council or the Programme Officer to troubleshoot any problems before the actual hearings, with no Inspectors present. The Programme Officer confirmed that he would organise and arrange such a session as necessary in September.

GDPR / data sharing

10. The Inspectors advised that GDPR / data sharing matters are covered in the Service Level Agreement between the Council and the Planning Inspectorate. However, as the Council are the hosts of the hearing sessions, they should be aware that a privacy notice may need to be published on the Examination website if the hearing sessions are to be recorded and published in any form. This would be in addition to the statutory six-week notification in advance of the hearings. If this is necessary, the Council should liaise with their own GDPR/data protection officer to ensure that the necessary privacy notices are in place.

Examination website

11. The Inspectors requested that the Council's Examination website is updated to provide a clearer position on the status of the current Examination, pending deadlines and documents recently published as part of the Examination. The Examination website as a source of information will become critical for keeping participants up-to-date during the hearings.
12. The Council indicated its intention to seek to update the website with regard to the current status of the Examination, and also improve the links between relevant webpages.

Other procedural matters

13. The Inspectors advised that subject to the receipt of the Council's Schedule of Main Modifications in a timely manner, that it is the aim to publish MIQs, associated guidance notes and a draft hearings programme in July for both stages of the hearings. However, the Inspectors are still reflecting on the possibility of the MIQs being phased into two stages. The deadline for hearing statements will likely be at least four weeks after their publication, to allow the Council and participants additional time over the Summer holiday period, but not less than 2 weeks before the start of the hearings. The Inspectors also confirmed that the Regulation 24 notice will need to be published by not later than 8 August 2022 to ensure that the six-week notification period of the start of the hearings would be met.

Conclusion

14. The Inspectors thanked the participants for their positive contributions at the meeting. Any further questions on the contents of this note should be directed to the Inspectors via the Programme Officer.

Gareth Wildgoose

INSPECTOR

Mark Philpott

INSPECTOR

20 June 2022