

Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031

Inspector: Mr Simon Berkeley BA MA MRTPI
Programme Officer: Mrs Louise St John Howe
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Mr David Scholes
Chief Executive
North Hertfordshire District Council

By email only

24 September 2020

Dear Mr Scholes

Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031

As you will know, I have scheduled further hearing sessions as part of my examination of the Local Plan. These are programmed to open at 9.30am next Monday, 28 September. Among the first issues for scrutiny are the objective assessment of housing need ('the OAN') and the supply of land for housing.

It has come to my attention that a motion has been put forward by Councillors for a discussion to be held at an extraordinary meeting of the Council. As I understand it, that motion effectively seeks a reduction in the OAN figure to be supported by the Council through the examination.

You will appreciate my expectation is that Council officers appearing at my hearings are able to firmly and unambiguously articulate the position of the Council in respect of the matters under discussion. In the light of the aforementioned motion, I am unsure as to whether your officers will be in a position to meet that expectation. That is a matter for you and your Council to decide.

Either way, I now need to know as a matter of significant urgency whether or not the Council would wish to proceed with the hearings in line with the current schedule. Despite the best attempts of my Programme Officer, Louise St John Howe, I have been unable to ascertain any certainty about this. If there is doubt on your part, then you should request that I postpone the hearings until the outcome of the extraordinary meeting is known. I would be willing to do this – it would be a waste of time for all concerned if your officers are not in a position to properly explain and defend the Council's stance.

I look forward to your expedient reply. If I have not heard from you by the 'close of play' tomorrow I will assume that the Council is content for hearings to go ahead as planned and I will proceed on that basis.

Please ensure that a copy of this letter is placed on the examination web page.

Yours sincerely

Simon Berkeley

Inspector

cc. Mr Nigel Smith, Strategic Planning Manager, North Hertfordshire District Council