

**SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL:
Examination of the Policies, Sites & Places Plan**

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NOTE OF FINAL HEARING SESSION - THURSDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2017

1. The purpose of the final hearing session was broadly administrative and covered the following:
 - Outstanding information;
 - Inspector's post-hearing advice;
 - Main Modifications (and Additional Modifications);
 - Next Steps;
 - Questions.

Outstanding Information

2. Clarification of how the provisions of PSP37 (para. 8.3) would apply to reserved matters applications is required in the form of a note from the Council, or as part of the schedule of Main Modifications. In response to issues raised by participants at the relevant hearing, the Council also intends to provide further information about recent housing sales values and the split between brownfield and greenfield development.

Post-Hearing Advice, Main Modifications & Additional Modifications

3. A key post-hearing task is to finalise the schedule of Main Modifications and, at the Council's discretion, any Additional Modifications. Main Modifications are those which are necessary to make the plan sound and so they would materially affect its policies or the interpretation thereof. Additional Modifications are those which, taken together, would not materially affect the policies in the plan, such as minor factual updates, grammatical corrections or typographical corrections etc.
4. My concern is solely with the Main Modifications and these would need to be subject to public consultation and, if necessary, Sustainability Appraisal. If the Council wishes to publish any Additional Modifications for completeness, it should be very clear that these are the Council's responsibility and that they do not form part of my examination of the plan.

The Main Modifications

5. Document E13 represents significant progress towards a final schedule of Main Modifications. To complete the process, it is necessary to attend to the following:
 - i. I need to consider a number of matters in light of the evidence presented at the hearings. I must determine whether there are any potential soundness issues which are not addressed by the proposed modifications suggested to date, but which could be addressed by further changes. My aim is to provide the Council with initial post-hearing advice to this effect by around 17 March 2017. It will then be

for the Council to consider whether or how it wishes to modify the plan in response to my advice, and to review the alternatives which might be open to it.

ii. In parallel with the above, the Council can continue work on the schedule of Main Modifications having regard to the progress of the examination so far. To this end, the Council has agreed to consider amendments to the following policies/suggested main modifications (SMM):

- PSP2: Distinction between proposals within the AONB and outside it.
- PSP5: Clarity of the second policy paragraph.
- PSP11: Check references to amended policy clauses in SMM11-14, and repetition in SM17.
- PSP16: Whether SMM15 should be strengthened with the evidence provided in response to my Issues & Questions.
- PSP20: SMM19 missing word "period" in part a).
- PSP27: Clarity of the first sentence concerning the 3000m² threshold.
- PSP31: Whether the supporting text should explain how the situation after 2021 would be addressed.
- PSP37: Whether SMM34 should form part of the policy rather than the supporting text; clarity of para. 8.3 in respect of reserved matters applications.
- PSP39: Whether there should be a cross-reference to other applicable policies.
- PSP42: Consideration of "shell-homes".
- PSP43: Whether SMM36 should be an Additional Modification; cross-referencing error in para. 8.65.
- PSP45: To change the name of the policy.
- PSP46: Regarding how the delivery objectives for the new build are expressed; and the provision of explanatory text to accompany the map of the old facility.
- PSP47: To clarify the difference between safeguarded and allocated sites, and to provide a single point of reference for all such sites in the plan.

6. Turning to the format of the final schedule of Main Modifications, each modification or group of modifications (and it is preferable to group them as far as possible) should have the prefix MM rather than SMM. It should clearly state which policy and part of the policy or supporting text the change relates to. Whilst a version highlighting the origin of the change might be useful for consultation purposes, the final version provided to me should omit any justification for the change.

7. The final schedule will need to be published for consultation, but it should be agreed with me before consultation commences. The consultation process should be consistent with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and it should be clear that any representations should only address the proposed changes and any implications thereof. The Council should bear in mind the possible need for further sustainability appraisal. I will take account of any representations received in finalising my report. Whilst it is possible to hold further hearing sessions to discuss the outcome of the consultation, I do

not anticipate this being necessary, particularly because the Main Modifications have already reached an advanced stage.

Next Steps

8. The remaining stages of the examination are summarised below:

- I will provide post-hearing advice to the Council by around 17 March 2017.
- The Council will finalise the Main Modifications Schedule taking account of my advice. The Council should provide me with an estimate of how long it will require to complete this task.
- The final Main Modifications schedule should be agreed with me, and the Council should advise me of the consultation period.
- Upon receipt of the consultation responses, I will finalise my report. It is difficult to provide timings at this stage, but a reasonable estimate would be 6 weeks after the receipt of responses depending upon my other commitments. More precise dates will be advised as work progresses.
- The examination remains open until my report is submitted to the Council, but, with the exception of that set out in this note, no further information will now be accepted unless I specifically request it.

Questions

9. In response to a question asked by a participant in the final hearing session, the Council confirmed that Officers have delegated authority for all remaining stages of plan preparation up to but excluding the adoption of the plan. There were no other questions.

Finally

10. I would like to thank the Council Officers for their thorough and timely responses to the questions I have raised during the examination so far; and for the attendance of a range of Officers at the hearings to present their specialist evidence. I extend my thanks to the other participants who have provided me with useful information through written statements and/or their attendance at the hearings. Finally, thank you to Verity Britton for her efficient work as Programme Officer, and to Natalie Maggs, who assisted with the administration of the hearings.

Louise Phillips

INSPECTOR