



Teignbridge Local Plan 2020-2040 - Examination

Inspectors

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18 December 2024

Mrs Michelle Luscombe
Head of Strategy and Partnerships
Teignbridge District Council
Forde House
Brunel Road
Newton Abbot
TQ12 4XX

SENT BY EMAIL

Dear Mrs Luscombe

Inspectors' Initial Advice

1. We are writing to advise you of our initial findings in relation to several key matters following the hearing sessions held in September, October, and November 2024, and to set out our thoughts at this stage on the way forward for the examination.
2. First, we would like to thank the Council for its constructive and helpful contributions throughout the hearing sessions which, together with those of all other participants, have enabled us to significantly progress the examination. Thank you also for the further information, evidence, and clarifications, including in connection with Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the hybrid spatial strategy, produced during and following the hearing sessions, and to those who have provided consultation comments on matters of relevance to their original representations on the plan, where requested.



3. Our initial findings are based on everything that we have read, heard, and seen to date. However, we emphasise that the examination is not yet complete and, in particular, further SA (including in relation to the Design Codes), and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), and public consultation on Main Modifications to the plan, will be required. Therefore, the initial advice in this letter is made without prejudice to our final conclusions on the soundness and legal compliance of the plan overall.
4. At this point, and subject to the above provisos, we conclude that with the Main Modifications detailed below the plan is likely to be capable of being found legally compliant and sound. More detailed reasons for our findings on the following matters will be in our final report in due course, which will also cover other significant matters that have arisen during the examination but are not covered in this letter.
5. In summary the Main Modifications we consider to be necessary for the plan to be sound are:
 - All those which we indicated during the hearing sessions to be necessary, which are not repeated here.
 - Modification of policy H1 in relation to the housing trajectory, the approach to any unmet needs arising, and the approach to under-delivery.
 - Modification of policy EE2 to reflect the designation of the Peamore Park Registered Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest.
 - Modification of policy GC15 in relation to minerals safeguarding.
 - Any further modifications we conclude may be necessary following further SA of the Design Codes, which is to be the subject of discussion at a virtual hearing session in late January 2025.

Dealing with any unmet needs and under delivery

6. There was considerable discussion at the hearing about policy H1(3) and its proposed arrangements should housing not be delivered in accordance with the plan or if the identified need for new homes (including taking account of possible unmet needs in neighbouring areas) were to change in the future. However, having given careful consideration to all we have read and heard on the matter, we consider that legislation and national policy/guidance together set out clear requirements in this regard. Consequently, we conclude that policy H1(3) is unnecessary and could result in less, rather than more, clarity as to the appropriate approach to be adopted in such circumstances. On this basis we consider that policy H1(3) is unsound and should be deleted.
7. Instead, it should be replaced with explanatory text which briefly explains that in the event of housing not being delivered in accordance with the plan, or if the identified needs for new homes were to change, the requirements of legislation and national policy/guidance in respect of the need for a review/update of the plan will be followed. Main Modifications to policy H1 should be drafted accordingly.



Housing Trajectory

8. Further to the hearing and having subsequently had opportunity to review the methodology underpinning the Council's windfall allowance figure of 136dpa, we are satisfied that this is a justified level of allowance based on historic trends and despite low windfall completions in the last two years.
9. We invite the council to update, for our consideration and consultation, the plan's housing trajectory and five-year housing land supply, including taking account of revised figures discussed at the hearing where relevant and the degree of unaccounted-for shortfall accrued since the start of the plan period. Further resultant modifications to policy H1 will also be necessary.

Edge of Exeter

10. We indicated at the hearing that we would further consider the individual and cumulative effects of the Edge of Exeter site allocations in soundness terms, including any need for development contour limits to be specified for landscape reasons. Having undertaken further visits to view the sites, including from locations within the city, our current conclusion is that no additional specific policy requirements relating to landscape are necessary for the plan to be sound. Our report will cover the issues in more detail, however the various other modifications that were covered at the hearing remain necessary and the Main Modifications should be drafted accordingly.
11. In addition, we advise that the designated area within policy EE2 (Peamore and West Exe) should be removed from the site allocation due to the confirmed addition of Peamore Park to the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. This will require a change to the policies map, which should be consulted upon in due course alongside the Main Modifications. The resultant reduction in employment provision likely to arise from the redistribution of housing within the amended allocation area should also be reflected in employment figures elsewhere in the plan, where relevant. Our current understanding is that this could be achieved whilst maintaining sufficient overall supply of employment land over the plan period.

Newton Abbot and Kingsteignton Garden Community

12. We also indicated at the hearing that that we would further consider several aspects of the policy GC13 allocation (Bradmore New Neighbourhood), including any need for development contour limits to be specified for landscape reasons, the policy's approach to development near pylons, and whether the requirement for on-site provision of land for a secondary school campus should remain.
13. The evidence shows a new school will be required at Newton Abbot to support planned growth, and, for various reasons, no suitable locations have been identified that remain available other than within the GC13 site. Furthermore, having carefully considered the opinions presented at



the hearing and undertaken further visits in the locality of GC13, our current conclusion is that no additional specific policy requirements relating to the pylons or landscape are necessary.

14. The County Council has set out potential minerals safeguarding concerns for policy GC15 (Undercleave). For reasons that will be further set out in our report policy GC15 should be modified to place more emphasis on the need for a Minerals Resource Assessment (MRA) to be carried out at an early stage, together with consultation with the minerals planning authority. In part, this is because the MRA may have implications for the development of the site for housing, including for the developable area and site capacity, that go beyond purely layout considerations. In addition, the plan should acknowledge that the site lies partially within, not just adjacent to, a Minerals Safeguarding Area and set out that the findings of the MRA will be an important consideration in the determination of any planning application for this site.
15. Our report will cover these and other issues in more detail, however the various other modifications that were covered at the hearing also remain necessary and the Main Modifications should be drafted accordingly.

National Planning Policy

16. The NPPF was revised on 12 December 2024 and, as anticipated, includes transitional arrangements relevant to this examination such that it will continue under the provisions of the September 2023 version of the NPPF.

Next Steps

17. The Council should let us know via the Programme Officer if it has any queries on the content of this letter. Assuming that the Council would be content to adopt the plan subject to these modifications, we would be grateful if the Council's team would now prepare for our consideration a schedule of the precise proposed wording for all Main Modifications, to then be subject to SA and HRA insofar as necessary and full public consultation in due course. It would be helpful to receive an indication of the timescale the Council considers necessary to address the additional work and drafting of modifications as outlined above.
18. Please arrange for this letter to be published on the examination website. However, at this stage we are not inviting comments from representors or any other party on the matters raised in it.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Jack and Malcolm Rivett

INSPECTORS