

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION**  
**UPDATE ON PROGRESS IN RESPECT OF INSPECTOR'S ACTIONS**

**21 JANUARY 2020**

Dear Mrs Phillips

**Re: Epping Forest District Local Plan (2011-2033) Examination**

1. Thank you for your letter dated 25 November 2019 (ED102) in response to the Council's letter of 11 October 2019 (ED100). The Council welcomes your confirmation (in paragraph 1) that your advice dated 02 August 2019 (ED98) covers all the "misgivings" that you had at the close of the hearings. It is helpful to note therefore that subject to the implications of the additional work that is required (as you clearly set out within ED98) and future consultation on the Main Modifications (MMs), neither further work or MMs are required in respect of matters you have not covered. We note your reference to MMs which were "agreed" with you during the hearing sessions and return to this matter in paragraph 6 of this update.
2. We welcome your clarification in respect of the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS). The Council is giving further consideration to its evidence base and will report to you in due course - we currently anticipate that this will be provided in the week commencing 27 January 2020 with the second tranche of MMs (see paragraph 6 below).
3. We acknowledge that you are broadly content with our proposed approach to progressing with the HRA matters and note in particular, the specific points you raise in paragraph 9 of your letter. We would like to reassure you that we are in close and ongoing liaison with Natural England and this includes in respect of the "beyond reasonable scientific doubt" test. Within our update below we outline recent meetings held with Natural England. We also note your comment in respect of modelling to take account of changes to the Plan's site allocations referred to in your advice and whether we would consider further amendments if necessary to avoid adverse effects on the SAC. We would like to reassure you that this will be given further consideration when the outcome of the further air quality modelling is known.

## Timeline

4. As outlined within our letter of 11 October 2019, we are keen to ensure that you are kept fully informed about our progress in delivering the additional work identified and any implications for the overall work programme. To assist, particularly in respect of the overall work programme, please find attached a high-level timeline of key tasks and milestones required to reach the MM Consultation stage. You will note the first column (entitled “Aligning with ED100”) is provided to help you connect the timeline with the initial work programme that the Council outlined within our letter of 11 October 2019. It might also be helpful to point out the interdependencies column which is key and also, the status column at the end, which will be particularly helpful to note our progress in future updates to you.
5. In terms of the overall programme, you will see that the HRA and SA of the MMs is due to be completed in mid-May 2020 and that we currently anticipate public consultation on the MMs from early July 2020.
6. Within your letter (25 November 2019) you helpfully indicate that you are willing to consider drafts as work is done in order to ensure efficiency in finalising the MM Schedule. We are conscious of the need to minimise the points at which we are seeking feedback and of the need for absolute clarity in defining where changes are made between versions to assist you. The attached timeline proposes seeking your feedback on MMs at two further points within the programme. We have already submitted the first tranche of MMs to you (task D) and we are seeking to submit the second tranche of MMs to you (task G2) in the week commencing 27 January 2020. We indicate within the timeline that you will review both tranche 1 and 2 of the MMs and provide comments by the end of the week commencing 03 February 2020. Submission 3 (task Q) is scheduled for week commencing 01 June 2020 and we have allowed two weeks for you to review and provide comments. We would be grateful if you could please confirm if this is acceptable and that the time allowed is sufficient.

## Update

7. The Council has made good progress with the actions in relation to the HRA. As set out in paragraph 38 of our response to your advice (ED100) the Council has undertaken an initial re-run of the air quality modelling using the ‘tall vegetation deposition velocity rates’. We have also undertaken additional ANPR surveys to provide the most up to date bespoke vehicle fleet mix of the traffic using the roads in the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation. A technical meeting has been

held with Natural England's representatives and expert advisors to discuss the Council's proposed methodological updates and reviews and a further meeting was held in mid-December to which the Conservators of Epping Forest also attended. The Council has also sought Defra's views on aspects of the proposed methodological updates via its Air Quality Helpdesk. It is anticipated that a final methodology for the HRA will be established in January 2020 to enable the Council to undertake the transport modelling and then air quality modelling of various alternative scenarios in accordance with the methodology discussed with Natural England. As soon as the Council has finalised the methodology for that work, we will share it with you.

8. In respect of non-HRA actions, we are making good progress and a significant tranche of these will be compiled for your consideration in week commencing 27 January 2020.
9. Task F in the timeline refers to updates to the viability testing. The Council made a commitment during hearing sessions (Matter 14) to update and consolidate the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and viability documents supporting the Local Plan. The Council has commissioned HDH Planning & Development Ltd to undertake this work (the same consultants undertook the work for the Garden Town viability) and a Developer Forum was held on 26 November 2019 to discuss the methodological approach and key assumptions in updating the viability evidence. Consultation closed on the draft updated and consolidated viability report with on 6 January 2020. Full details of the consultation can be found on the [Council's website](#).
10. For the avoidance of doubt, the Council has taken account of paragraphs 9 to 11 of your post-hearing advice (ED98) and is not carrying out this viability work (Task F) to enable modifications to be made to the Plan to invoke paragraph 57 of the 2019 NPPF, which you have advised are not necessary for soundness. To be clear, any further MMs proposed by the Council will be limited to the scope suggested in your post-hearing advice.
11. The programme of viability work being undertaken has wider relevance to infrastructure delivery in the District and the implementation of the Local Plan, and will continue beyond the conclusion of the Examination. As such, the additional work does not have significant implications for either the viability of the Plan or the infrastructure needed to support it.
12. We reported to Cabinet on 6 January 2020 in respect of the latest position regarding planning applications held in abeyance. The report can be found on the Council's Examination website for your reference as [EB144](#).

13. We hope that you find this update helpful and if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me. We will provide a further update on progress in February 2020. If you are able to come back to us in the meantime in respect of the MMs that would be most helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison Blom-Cooper". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Alison Blom-Cooper