

**Local Plan Inspector's Findings: Briefing Note**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015**

We have now received the Local Plan Inspector's findings regarding the topics covered in the initial hearings that took place last month. The letter is attached to this email. The letter raises some very significant concerns with regard to our Local Plan, and officers will need time to consider options, before we come back to members with recommendations on how to proceed. The letter will be published tomorrow (Wednesday) and we will be undertaking a media briefing tomorrow.

The key points to note in the letter are:

- The Inspector is satisfied that the Council has fulfilled the legal Duty to Cooperate
- The Inspector is concerned that there is an identified unmet housing need in Coventry and Warwickshire (at least 234 dwellings per annum) and is requiring this to be addressed (jointly with the other authorities in the Housing Market Area) before the Plan can proceed
- He rejects the collaborative process we have agreed with the other authorities within the Housing Market Area to address the unmet need – namely that the unmet need can be dealt with through adopting this Local Plan and then undertaking early plan reviews. Instead he is asking for the unmet need to be addressed in the current plan making round. There are therefore implications for all of the Coventry and Warwickshire authorities in his findings.
- The Inspector is concerned that, regardless of whether we need to provide more houses to contribute toward the unmet need, the total supply of houses set out in the Plan is not sufficient to meet the Plan's housing requirement. In particular he argues that the allowance we have made for windfalls has not been fully justified. He also indicates that we need to provide some "headroom" above the minimum housing requirement in case some sites do not come forward.
- He therefore says we need to increase the number of houses identified in the Plan even without the need to the District to accommodate some of the unmet need within the Housing Market Area
- He recommends that the Plan is withdrawn to give us time to prepare new proposals

In short, the Inspector has taken a tough stance on the Plan and unless his approach can be challenged in some way, this will lead to a substantial delay, requiring us to take some steps back to enable us to make some very significant additional site allocations.

As explained above, officers are currently giving further consideration to the Inspector's letter and are considering options regarding the way forward. It is therefore too early to offer substantive analysis of the Inspector's findings. Having said that it is worth noting the following:

- He has taken a surprisingly hard line against the sub-regional approach which will make it difficult to fix the issues quickly and painlessly
- He is clear that we need to be planning for more houses, not less, to make plan sound and the further work is required to assess how many more houses are needed
- There are likely to be significant implications for the other authorities in Coventry and Warwickshire as a result of his findings and these will need to be addressed through further duty to cooperate discussions
- Whilst there are a number of detailed points that officers have issues with, it is important that we stay focused on finding ways to resolve the strategic issues he has raised