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From the Inspector
Plymouth and South West
Devon Joint Local Plan 2014 -
2034

Our ref LDF 001819
Date 4 September 2017

To Plymouth City Council,
West Devon Borough Council
and South Hams District
Council and all Reg 19
Consultation respondents

Dear Sirs

**Examination into the soundness of the Plymouth and South West Devon
Joint Local Plan 2014 -2034**

As you know, I have been appointed together with Mrs Yvonne Wright to hold the examination into the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (PSWDJLP "JLP").

From our initial review of the documents which have been submitted and published in the examination library, we wish to raise the following matters.

Evolution of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014 -2034

Can the Councils please provide a timeline which identifies the different stages in the preparation of the JLP, together with a list of references to those documents in the examination library which are linked to each of those stages. If there are documents which are not currently in the examination library but which formed an important part of the evidence base to a stage in the process, can those documents please be identified and added to the examination library.

For example, there is reference in representations made on the submitted JLP to a June 2016 document "Establishing the Objectively Assessed Need" which is stated to have underpinned a draft JLP and identified an OAN of 30,300 in the housing market area, of which some 700 was required in the Dartmoor National Park.

It would be helpful for the Councils to clarify whether an earlier draft version of the JLP has been produced prior to the submission JLP, and provide the evidence base for any earlier calculation of OAN.

In addition, we note that the majority of the submission documents listed in the examination library are dated July 2017. Can the Councils please clarify whether all

those which have this date were actually produced at that time? It appears that some of the documents may have been produced at an earlier date – for example SUB9C. Where documents were produced at an earlier date, can that date please be included in the title to the document and where appropriate, provided on the examination library list.

Contents of the PSWDJLP

To assist in navigating the JLP, in particular in the search for policies, can the Councils produce a revised contents page. This should list under each Chapter heading each of the Policies which appear within that Chapter together with the policy title and page number. For example:

3 Spatial Strategy	
<i>Policy SPT1: Delivering sustainable development</i>	15
<i>Policy SPT2: Sustainable linked neighbourhoods and sustainable rural communities</i>	17

In addition can the Councils please provide the title to each of the annexes to the JLP on the contents page.

The Housing Topic Paper (TP3) makes reference to “Annex X” of the JLP. To which annex in the JLP does this refer?

Allocated and omission sites

In relation to the housing and employment sites allocated in the JLP, we will consider them against the tests of soundness listed in para 182 of the NPPF. In relation to alternative or omission sites, our duty is to examine the soundness of the Plan and of the proposals for development which make up the Plan. We will not therefore consider the merits of any proposals for development which have been omitted from the Plan. In the event that in the course of the examination there appears to be a need for additional development sites in order to deliver the housing requirement, it will be a matter for us to raise with the Councils to ascertain what they would propose in order to meet such a need.

Delivery of housing

The Councils have produced a series of housing trajectories and diagrams as appendices to the Housing Topic Paper (TP3). The trajectories are essential for the testing of the deliverability of the housing land supply proposed to meet the housing requirement for the period of the JLP.

We welcome the submission of the trajectories, but would invite the Councils to reproduce these documents in a format which will be easy for the Inspectors and all participants to deal with during the preparation for and at the hearings. They are currently very difficult to work with electronically, and the paper copies which have been produced are too large to be user friendly. We suggest that the Councils use the format for trajectories produced by other Councils to support their development plans, such as those at Annex A to the North Northants Joint Core Strategy, or at Appendix B to the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan Examination document ECO6.

In TP3, it is stated (para 8.7) that the trajectories are based on the March 2016 housing monitoring point. The trajectories have the date of 13 March 2017 in the heading, with housing completions to 2015-16. Can the Councils please confirm that although the trajectories in the appendices to TP3 are dated March 2017, they are based on March 2016 data. In addition can the Councils consider whether it would be

possible to provide an update of the trajectories to March 2017 which can be submitted as part of the Councils' evidence to the hearings.

The Councils are therefore requested to produce trajectories for each of the Policy Areas at no greater than A3 paper size, which list individually those sites which would accommodate 5 or more dwellings and which are expected to contribute to the housing land supply for the plan period, identifies the planning status and expected capacity of each site, then identifies any past completions together with the expected rate of development for that site for each year from 2014 to 2034. With regard to sites expected to accommodate less than 5 dwellings, the total likely development on small sites for the Plan period should be included, with the estimated rate of delivery of that total over the Plan period.

In producing the trajectories, the Councils should consider as part of their evidence for the hearings, the extent to which the lead in times and delivery rates have been agreed with the main developers for each site, and if not, what assumptions are being made in relation to lead in times and delivery rates for each of the sites.

The information provided in the appendices in the form of graphs, tables and pie charts in relation to each Policy Area should also be presented in a form which can be made available in a readable form on paper no greater than A3 size.

In addition, can the Councils please consider and respond to the following:

- Should a trajectory be included in the JLP to demonstrate how residential development is expected to be delivered in accordance with the requirement in Policy STP3?
- How will the 5 year housing land supply for each Council area be calculated in order to demonstrate that the provision in the JLP for the 5 year supply within each of the 2 policy areas is being delivered?

Flood Risk Assessment

We note that a number of studies have been carried out in relation to flood risk within the JLP area. Can the Councils please confirm that the Environment Agency (EA) has been consulted at each stage of flood risk assessment, and is satisfied that the JLP strategy would not contribute to any unacceptable increase in flood risk?

Other issues, such as the effects of the housing provision in Plymouth upon water quality are raised in representations from the EA and we note that the Councils consider that other policies in the Plan are sufficient to deal with the EA's concerns. Has there been any further liaison with EA to ensure that those concerns can be fully met through the provisions of those policies?

Sustainability Appraisal/SEA

Appendix X of the Integrated Assessment (IA) contains the sustainability appraisal/SEA assessment for the JLP (SUB9J). It lists 17 SA/SEA topics and objectives and sets out the assessment matrix. However we note that a separate site selection methodology has been used for the assessment of housing sites (SUB9F). How does this fit in with the SA/SEA assessment matrix? Can the Councils confirm which documents specifically compare the merits of individual sites and set out the reasons why particular sites have been allocated when compared with others?

Para 8.5 of the IA concludes that the majority of JLP policies are likely to have a significant positive effect (SUB9). Whilst some negative effects have been identified para 8.6 states that none give rise for concern. However para 8.7 identifies that the significance of potential negative effects is uncertain. Can the Councils summarise

those areas of the plan where potential negative effects have been identified, and which of these are of uncertain significance? Are there any implications for specific policies and the JLP overall from the level of uncertainty demonstrated within the assessment?

Can the Councils please confirm that Natural England (NE) has been consulted at each stage of the SA/SEA process? SUB11E Appendix V of the Statement of Consultation contains three letters of consultation on the scoping report of the IA and it is unclear who these have been sent to. Can the Councils direct us to the list of statutory consultees that have been consulted on the SA/SEA process, and provide copies of the correspondence which has been received from those consultees.

Statements of Common Ground

We note that the Councils propose to seek statements of common ground (SoCG) with Devon County Council and Historic England in relation to representations made to the JLP. We also request the Councils seek SoCG with NE and with the EA. We may request further SoCG at a later stage of the examination.

Plymouth Airport

Policies SPT8 and PLY42 seek to safeguard the Plymouth airport site for potential resumption of aviation use. Para 4.173 of the JLP refers to evidence prepared by Arup in this regard. Can the Councils clarify which document this refers to and if it is not an examination document, include it within the examination library.

Hearings

We expect to begin to hold hearings in the week beginning 29 January 2018. The hearings will continue for two to three weeks as necessary. We aim to publish the timetable for the hearings, with a list of participants for each session together with matters, issues and questions for discussion by the end of October 2017.

Those respondents to the Regulation 19 public consultation (15 March to 26 April 2017) who made a request for their views to be heard at a hearing have a right to participate in the discussion at the hearings. We may invite additional participants who have evidence which would be of assistance to us on a particular matter. **If you made representations to the Regulation 19 consultation in which you requested to be heard, and you still wish to participate at the hearings, please contact the Programme Officer on or before midday on the 6 October 2017 to confirm that you wish to appear and provide the ID number of the relevant representation.** Any party who fails to register or confirm their wish to appear on or before that date will not be included in the programme for the hearings.

Target for response

In order to progress the examination in a timely fashion, we would request that the Councils' response to this note be completed and published in the examination library on or before midday of the 6 October 2017. Please let us know, through the Programme Officer, if you have any questions on the content of this letter.

Yours faithfully

Wendy Burden and Yvonne Wright

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