

From: Alexa Williams <alexa.williams@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk>
To: 'progofficer@aol.com' <progofficer@aol.com>
CC: Ruth Bamford <r.bamford@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk>; Michael Dunphy <m.dunphy@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk>; Emma Baker <emma.baker@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk>
Sent: Wed, 17 Dec 2014 17:10
Subject: Sustainability Appraisal - Examination

Dear Helen

As you are aware, we asked the Inspector to postpone the last December Hearing Session in order that officers could take time to properly understand the Redditch Sustainability Appraisal in the absence of a key staff member.

Having read the Hearing Statements submitted by other parties on the 4th December, we feel that the SA refresh is still not as clearly set out as it could be. In order to address adequately the concerns raised about the SA, officers would like to seek the Inspector's opinion on a possible further delay to the Examination proceedings to undertake this work.

If the Inspector is amenable to a further delay, we will provide more details and likely timescales by Friday 9th January 2015.

Kind regards,

Ruth Bamford

Head of Planning Services

From: progofficer@aol.com [<mailto:progofficer@aol.com>]
Sent: 18 December 2014 10:27
To: Alexa Williams
Cc: Ruth Bamford; Michael Dunphy; Emma Baker
Subject: Re: Sustainability Appraisal - Examination

Alexa

Please see the following from the Inspector -

Inspector's Note to Redditch Borough Council (18 December 2014)

I refer to your e-mail (received 17 December 2014) seeking a further delay in the scheduling of the Cross-Boundary (XB) Hearing Session, which has been rearranged for 20 January 2015. I have some concerns about this request. As you are aware, this session has already been delayed once at your request. Furthermore, as you are also aware, the matters under consideration in respect of the evidence base supporting the evaluation of Redditch's housing development options are matters that were originally discussed at the Redditch examination hearings in September 2014. The principle of their reconsideration at the XB session (which was originally intended to relate to the Bromsgrove examination) was agreed by the Council at that time. While I have aimed to be both flexible and pragmatic in responding to these changing circumstances, I am anxious to ensure that further delays to both examinations are minimised. Additional examination time results in additional costs for all parties concerned, and places particular burdens on third party representors. Those parties wishing to attend the XB session have already had to make alternative arrangements to allow for the hearing to be rescheduled to January.

Furthermore, the Council's updated evidence base has already been added to the examination library and made available for further comment. Several parties have submitted representations and/or hearing statements on the basis of this evidence. If this evidence is now to be materially changed then

it may be necessary, for reasons of fairness, to republish any revised documents and allow for further representations to be made. This could result in further delay to the process. However, if the evidence is not to be materially changed, as implied by your e-mail (which refers to clarity rather than the substance of the evidence), then it is difficult to understand why such clarification could not be provided orally at the hearing session itself. (I should however advise at the outset that, for the reasons set out above, I will not accept the tabling of further revisions to the Council's written evidence at that session.)

As I have previously explained, I am anxious to avoid prejudicing the ability of the Council to present its case. However, unless the Council can explain in more detail why its concerns cannot be addressed orally at the January hearing, my preference would be to continue as scheduled. I should also ask you to note that I will be carrying out other casework during February that would preclude an early rescheduling of the session arranged for 20 January 2015.

I would be grateful for an early response to these comments. On a separate matter, I will be shortly writing to both Councils in respect of my e-mail dated 9 December 2014 regarding the matter of the formal request to make main modifications under section 20(7C) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

If you have any queries, then please let me know via the PO.

Kind regards

Helen

Helen Wilson
Programme Officer

01527 65741
07879 443035

From: Alexa Williams <alexa.williams@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk>
To: 'progofficer@aol.com' <progofficer@aol.com>
CC: Ruth Bamford <r.bamford@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk>; Michael Dunphy <m.dunphy@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk>; Emma Baker <emma.baker@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk>
Sent: Thu, 18 Dec 2014 15:47
Subject: RE: Sustainability Appraisal - Examination

Dear Helen,

In response to the Inspector's request for more detail I would like to provide the following information.

The team continues to suffer the absence of a key team member. Against this backdrop, the Council has sought advice about its Sustainability Appraisal (SA) from external consultants in light of the hearing statements submitted to the examination.

Following initial discussion, the advice we have received is suggesting that a two-stage re-write of the SA is required, to comprise:

- Appraisal of alternative strategies to deliver housing need, draft policies and proposed strategic sites

- Final SA report

They have advised us that while much of the material already exists, it needs to be assembled more coherently and will require further consultation. This clearly cannot be explained orally at the January hearing and can be considered a material change. Given the upcoming Christmas holidays the consultants are not able to provide a detailed programme of work until early January. However we felt it was important to raise this with the Inspector at the earliest possible opportunity.

The consultants have suggested that the work on the SA would take approximately three months. The Council appreciates the Inspector's concerns about a further delay and is grateful of the flexible and pragmatic approach he has taken so far. However, given the advice and the circumstance the team is currently in, we feel that an adjournment until springtime is the most appropriate course of action.

We will respond separately to the Inspector's email of 9th December regarding the formal request for modifications.

Kind regards,

Ruth Bamford

Head of Planning Services

From: progofficer@aol.com [<mailto:progofficer@aol.com>]

Sent: 19 December 2014 10:57

To: Alexa Williams

Cc: Ruth Bamford; Michael Dunphy; Emma Baker

Subject: Re: Sustainability Appraisal - Examination

Ruth

I have had the following from the Inspector -

Inspector's Note to Redditch Borough Council – 19 December 2014:

The Inspector advises that, in the light of the most recent e-mail from Redditch Borough Council, he agrees to the postponement of the hearing session scheduled for 20 January 2015. He feels that the session would have limited value if further material changes are still to be made to the Council's SA evidence. While he remains concerned that this will lead to further delays to both the Redditch and Bromsgrove examinations, he considers that it is important that all parties should have an appropriate opportunity to see and comment upon the Council's revised evidence.

He looks forward to a revised programme being agreed as soon as possible and notes that the Council will provide a suggested timescale by Friday 9 January 2015. He will ask the PO to notify relevant parties and to place a notice on the examination websites. This should include a summary of the reasons for the requested postponement.

Kind regards

Helen

Helen Wilson
Programme Officer

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