

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

INTRODUCTORY NOTE FROM THE APPOINTED INSPECTOR

This is a mere introductory note to acknowledge receipt of the Examination documentation and confirm that I am in touch with the Programme Officer (PO).

At this very early stage I can give no firm guidance as to how I see the Examination progressing but I will be making an initial study of the Plan and the evidence base over the next two to three weeks, after which I may have some initial questions for the NPA.

The NPA will be aware of the currently stretched resources of the Planning Inspectorate and my own availability is limited through the rest of the Spring and Summer months, owing to a range of ongoing and unavoidable professional and personal commitments. This means that, regrettably, I will not be able to devote full attention to the Examination until October.

Noting that the NPA wishes to avoid Hearings in August, and having regard to the typical timeline in the Planning Inspectorate Practice Guidance, 4th Edn June 2016, I would not have expected to be able to conduct more than perhaps a preliminary Hearing session in late July in any event, with the main programme deferred until the Autumn.

However, much can be done in preparation and I will adhere to my usual practice of moving the Examination along as efficiently as possible, with Hearings programmed to as compressed a time scale as circumstances will allow.

I would add though, that it may appropriate, as in many other examinations for comprehensive local plans, to hold Hearings covering essential legal and strategic soundness matters, such as Duty to Co-operate, housing requirement or other key Plan-wide matters, before agreeing a firm programme for Hearings on local and development management issues.

I hope the NPA planning team and Members do not find this time frame too depressing. For my part, I look forward with interest to examining the SDNP's first comprehensive local plan.

Should the NPA have any initial concerns please raise them with me via the PO.

Brian Sims

Inspector

11 May 2018