

FAO Mr P Lewis

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15 June 2023

Dear Inspector

### **Examination of the Tandridge District Council Our Local Plan: 2033**

Thank you for your letter dated 23 May 2023, which the Council received on 5 June 2023.

I reiterate the Council's commitment to obtaining a sound Local Plan, and to bringing the examination to a close at the earliest possible opportunity.

I am grateful to you for recording the Department's expectation that Inspectors should deal with examinations pragmatically. It seems to me that your welcome proposal of a procedural meeting is consistent with that expectation, and the Council is content to participate in just such a procedural meeting.

However, a procedural meeting in late June/early July is not realistic or appropriate.

As recorded above, the Council only received your letter on 5 June 2023.

In order to discuss the Council's procedural options for the Plan at the procedural meeting, and provide in advance the document you invite, the Council's Planning Policy Committee must first meet to debate the procedural options for the Plan and approve any such document. The committee cycle, coupled with the Summer recess period for both members and officers, naturally impacts upon the timing of the procedural meeting and production of the document in question.

The Council has recruited a Head of Planning Policy and Development Management, with a start date is 7 August 2023. The incoming Head ought, naturally, to be afforded the opportunity to contribute to the Council's procedural options for the Plan and the document you envisage. In the meantime, the Council is reliant upon interim officers and a part-time interim consultant on secondment. With the best will in the world, it is inappropriate to expect them to undertake the work you envisage in such a short timescale especially in circumstances where the submission of the Gatwick Airport DCO application is imminent and there are also four neighbourhood plans to be dealt with. In any event, and whatever the officer position, I would mention again the need for member input.

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The Council is rightly anxious to produce a thorough, realistic and considered document for you, prior to the procedural meeting, but the constraints identified rule this out within your envisaged timescale. Moreover, no useful purpose would be served by a premature procedural meeting at which very little could be discussed other than the timing of a subsequent and more substantive procedural meeting.

I would also mention that the Minister of State for Housing and Planning has offered the Council a meeting between its officials and council officers. The Council is making the arrangements for this meeting, which will be on or after the 27th July to align with the Government Department's Chief Planning Officer's availability. We would want this meeting to take place before the procedural meeting.

All things considered, the Council is very happy to participate in a procedural meeting on the first available date convenient to you and the Council after 18 September 2023. You and the Council should be the only parties attending and participating in the procedural meeting, although the Council is content for it to be streamed for the benefit of representors and the public generally.

Do please ask the Programme Officer to continue to liaise with the Council to arrange the procedural meeting.

Thank you again for your pragmatic and welcome suggestion of a procedural meeting as the next step for the examination.

Yours sincerely



David Ford  
Chief Executive