

Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy Pre-Hearing Meeting

**Council Offices, Wigston
Wednesday 17 March 2010**

Attended By:

Steve Birkinshaw	Government Office East Midlands
Tess Nelson	Harborough District Council
Michael Lambert	Leicestershire Constabulary
Guy Longley	Pegasus Planning for David Wilson Homes
Simon Smith	SSR Planning for Bloor Homes/Wheatcroft & Sons
Laura Tilston	SSR Planning for Bloor Homes/Wheatcroft & Sons
Diane Bowers	Turley Associates for University of Leicester
Don Candlin	Oadby Trinity Methodist Church
Frazer Robson	Frazer Robson Planning for Oadby Trinity Methodist Church
Louise Cotter	Marrons for Leicester Racecourse
Mary Ray	Saffron Trees Action Group

For the Council:

Rob Harbour	Head of Built Environment
Adrian Thorpe	Forward Plans Manager
Kirstie Rea	Senior Planning Officer, Forward Plans
Edward Morgan	Planning Officer, Forward Plans
Jamie Carr	Planning Officer, Forward Plans
Jim Cocker	Economic Development Officer
Sarah Hawkins	Planning Officer, Development Control

Inspector:

Jill Kingaby

Programme Officer:

Wil Tonkiss

Apologies:

Jez Donovan	Government Office East Midlands
Ian Althorpe	David Wilson Homes
Roger Yarwood	Derbyshire Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Group

1 Opening & Introductions

- 1.1 The Inspector welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited the attendees to introduce themselves.

2 Starting Point of the Examination

- 2.1 The document being examined is the Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy – Publication Draft Proposed Submission Document (October 2009).
- 2.2 This document is the starting point for the Examination.
- 2.3 Adrian Thorpe informed the Inspector that the Council has prepared a proposed schedule of minor changes. The Inspector asked that this schedule be added to the Document Library.

3 Purpose of the Pre-Hearing Meeting

- 3.1 The purpose of the Pre-Hearing Meeting (PHM) is to deal with preliminary procedural matters.
- 3.2 The PHM will ensure that everyone who takes part in the Hearing sessions knows what the format will be and what will be expected of them.
- 3.3 There will be no discussion of the merits of the content of the document or the process of its preparation at the PHM.

4 Programme for the Hearing Sessions

- 4.1 The Hearing sessions will take place at Beauchamp College in Oadby, and will start at 10am on Tuesday 27 April, finishing on Wednesday 5 May.
- 4.2 All those who made written representations on the Core Strategy within the relevant time period, under Regulation 28, and stated that they wished to attend the Hearings, have a right to be heard.
- 4.3 Louise Cotter of Marrons and Mary Ray of the Saffron Trees Action Group asked to be added to the list of attendees at the Hearings. The Inspector will look into allocating them to the appropriate sessions.
- 4.4 The examination started when the Council submitted the DPD to the Secretary of State. The Hearings are an important aspect of the examination but are nevertheless only one part of the process.
- 4.5 The role of the Inspector is to examine the Core Strategy and ensure that it complies with the legal requirements under the Planning and Compulsory Purchases Act 2004 and the Regulations as amended, and to determine whether it is sound.

- 4.6 The programme for the Hearings will be finalised following the PHM, but could still be subject to change. The Programme Officer will inform the interested parties of any changes as and when they occur.
- 4.7 The LDF system differs from earlier Local Plan or Unitary Development Plan Inquiries. The Hearings will proceed by way of round-table discussions of the principal matters and issues which the Inspector has identified as critical to the soundness of the document.
- 4.8 The Inspector will not talk directly to the participants or the Council's representatives, or the general public outside the Hearings. Any questions about the Hearings should be referred to Mr Tonkiss, the Programme Officer.
- 4.9 The Programme Officer is also responsible for the Examination Library which includes all of the main items of evidence for the Core Strategy.
- 4.10 The Programme Officer confirmed that the public can access the Document Library in hard copy at the Council Offices or via the Council's website.

5 Draft Matters and Issues for the Hearings

- 5.1 A draft programme for the Hearings has been prepared which lists 8 main matters, they are:
 - 1. Context and General Approach;
 - 2. Spatial Strategy for Development;
 - 3. Housing;
 - 4. Economic Development;
 - 5. Climate Change and Renewable Energy; Flood Risk and the Water Environment;
 - 6. Countryside, Open Space and Green Spaces;
 - 7. Transport;
 - 8. Infrastructure and Delivery.
- 5.2 All attendees confirmed that the matters as listed incorporate the main issues on which representations have been made and that there are no additional matters which should be addressed in the Hearings.

6 Purpose of the Hearings

- 6.1 The Examination will seek to establish whether the Core Strategy needs to be changed to make it sound.
- 6.2 If a case is made for changing any part this must include how exactly it should be changed.
- 6.3 The changes that the Inspector can require are limited to those which will not necessitate further consultation or sustainability appraisal. If a major change were required then the examination would need to be postponed to allow further consultation or sustainability appraisal to be completed.

- 6.4 Frazer Robson asked for further clarification as to what constitutes a major or minor change.
- 6.5 The Inspector referred to the tests of soundness as defined in Planning Policy Statement 12. A major change would constitute an amendment necessary for the DPD to be considered sound. Further public consultation would be required where not doing so would prejudice the interests of other people and parties.
- 6.6 Adrian Thorpe asked the Inspector to clarify her position regarding documents published after the Core Strategy was submitted, in particular Planning Policy Statement 4.
- 6.7 With regard to PPS4, the Inspector stated her view that as PPG4 and PPS6 are now expired the new PPS4 now constitutes the guidance on those issues. As such some adjustments to the document may need to be made.
- 6.8 Adrian Thorpe asked about the reference in the Draft Matters and Issues Document to the potential need for major changes and the subsequent consultation and sustainability appraisal that this may imply (Matter 4, Issue 1).
- 6.9 The Inspector stated that new PPS4 updates PPG4 and consolidates many earlier policies, eg. from PPS6 and PPS7. She is currently unaware that new PPS4 would require a substantial change to make the DPD sound. However, she has to investigate all avenues and ask relevant questions to ensure this is the case.

7 Schedule for the Hearings

- 7.1 The Draft Matters and Issues document will form the basis of the agenda for the Hearing sessions.
- 7.2 The proposed schedule is based on estimates of the time required to discuss each of the main matters and as such it cannot be exact.
- 7.3 It is proposed that the Hearings will run from 1000 hours to 1700 hours each day, with a break for lunch at 1300. Other breaks will be taken as appropriate.
- 7.4 The first day will start at 1000 hours but subsequent days could start earlier if necessary.
- 7.5 The Council confirmed that they are satisfied with the proposed schedule as is.
- 7.6 There is a Bank Holiday (Monday 3 May) at the start of the second week and a strong possibility of a General Election being held on the Thursday of the second week (6 May).
- 7.7 The programme will begin at 1300 on Tuesday 4 May.
- 7.8 If there is any outstanding business at the end of the scheduled sessions an 'Any Other Business' session may be necessary on the morning of Thursday 6 May.

- 7.9 The possibility of a review of the process at the end of the hearing sessions was also raised. This could take place at the end of the session on Wednesday 5, or alternatively on the morning of Thursday 6.
- 7.10 Don Candlin asked whether car parking at Beauchamp College would be provided.
- 7.11 The Programme Officer confirmed that Beauchamp College have provided assurances that sufficient car parking will be provided for the duration of the Hearings.

8 Hearing Attendees

- 8.1 A list of participants for each session has been assembled. The Inspector and Programme Officer have allocated people to the matters which particularly interest them, based on the representations.
- 8.2 Marrons Solicitors and the Saffron Trees Action Group indicated that they would like to provide oral evidence at the Hearings. The Inspector confirmed that they would be added to the programme.
- 8.3 All attendees confirmed that they have been allocated to appropriate sessions.
- 8.4 Frazer Robson queried whether a session could be moved as he is unavailable for the session on Matter 4 which concerns his client.
- 8.5 The Inspector reiterated that written representations carry as much weight as representations made in person at the Hearings.
- 8.6 Frazer Robson asked if it would be possible to hear his oral representations on Matter 4 at an 'Any Other Business' session at the end of the hearings.
- 8.7 The Inspector agreed to this in principal, if Mr Robson was unable to send a suitable representative to the session on 29 April.
- 8.8 There is a certain amount of flexibility in the programme because of the relatively small number of representations and participants.
- 8.9 Some parties who did not indicate that they wished to attend the hearings have also been invited. These parties have specialist knowledge and the Inspector feels the Examination would benefit from their presence.
- 8.10 The Inspector would like to know in advance who will be representing the various parties at the Examination. If professional representors will be attending details of the name and company of the advocate should be provided to the Programme Officer in advance.
- 8.11 Lawyers may make useful contributions to the discussions at the Hearings but should bear in mind that there should be no cross-examination or formal presentations at the sessions.

- 8.12 In order to ensure that there is a fair balance of participants there should not need to be more than 2 persons from each party sitting at the table.
- 8.13 The Council would be an exception to this general rule, but the principal of not 'overwhelming' other representors should be observed.

9 Additional Written Material

- 9.1 The list of Matters and Issues contains a list of questions which will form the basis of the discussions at the Hearings.
- 9.2 The Inspector requested that those who have already made representations submit further thoughts on these issues in writing. These questions will be circulated to all those who made representations, including those who have declined to attend the Hearings, by the Programme Officer.
- 9.3 These further representations should be as concise as possible and they should address the issues and questions raised in the Matters and Issues document directly.
- 9.4 The further written representations should specify exactly what is wrong with the Core Strategy and how it can be changed to make it sound.
- 9.5 Guy Longley asked for further guidance on the brevity of additional written representations.
- 9.6 The Inspector suggested a 3,000 word limit but said that this would not be strictly enforced and that there is room for flexibility. The Inspector also noted that appendices might usefully be used to cut the length of representations.
- 9.7 The Inspector asked that where reference was made to additional documentation that these references were specific and that only the relevant text should be included in appendices.
- 9.8 A finalised list of Matters and Issues will be sent out as soon as is practicable after the PHM.
- 9.9 All additional written submissions must be made as soon as possible, and not later than 0900 hours on 12 April (and sent to the Programme Officer).

10 Site Visits

- 10.1 The Inspector will visit all relevant places referenced in the Core Strategy. These visits will take place before, during and, if necessary, after the Hearings.
- 10.2 These visits will be made unaccompanied unless access to private land is required. If this is the case the Programme Officer will make the necessary arrangements.

11 Any Other Business

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- 11.1 The Inspector had drafted some notes on Chapter 3: A Spatial Portrait of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston.
- 11.2 The 2004 Act requires the Local Planning Authority to survey and understand their area. PPS12 states that the Spatial Portrait (analysis of the characteristics of the area) should be used to identify the key issues and challenges facing the area, and in turn inform the vision and policies. As such the Spatial Portrait is central to the DPD, forming the foundation of the document and setting out the main issues.
- 11.3 The Inspector asked the Council to take her notes on the Spatial Portrait and consider re-writing some aspects of the chapter.
- 11.4 As the Spatial Portrait is factual in content changes to it should not require any further consultation or sustainability appraisal.
- 11.5 Adrian Thorpe confirmed that the Council would be happy to take the Inspectors note into consideration.
- 11.6 The Inspector's note on Chapter 3 will be circulated by the Programme Officer to all those who made representations under Regulation 28.

12 Close

- 12.1 The Inspector closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.