

Inspector's Initial Comments / Questions to the Council

Pre-Hearing Meeting

As the Council do not anticipate the Hearing sessions to be any longer than 8 days and given the number of representations received, the Inspector considers that a Pre-Hearing meeting will not be necessary.

Hearing sessions

The Inspector is content for the Hearing sessions to commence on Tuesday 29 January 2013. Please note at least six weeks notice of the Hearing sessions is required, including press advertisement.

Representations

Copies of the representations should be displayed on the Council's web site in an electronic form. The Council has to decide whether the representations are "duly-made", and also has to accept whether to accept late representations. Late representations which are not formally accepted by the Council are not forwarded to the Secretary of State and the Inspector does not consider them. Please note that the Inspector has no discretion to accept late representations. **Has the Council received any late representations and have any not been accepted?**

Council responses to representations

The Council does not have to formally respond to representations, but if they do, the responses should be publicised and included on the database. **Does the Council intend to produce a response to the points raised in the representations made at publication stage and does it intend to circulate this to representors, and if so, what is the likely timetable?**

Database

The Inspector understands that the Programme Officer has access to the Council's database of representations, with all relevant details of the representations and representors. A key element is an indication of which representors have made comments on each policy / paragraph of the Core documents, together with a list of those who request an oral hearing. *The Programme Officer will need to produce a schedule of the representations, indicating who wishes for an oral hearing or is content with written representations on a policy-by-policy basis.* It might be helpful if the database is self contained; i.e. only includes those who have made representations at submission stage, rather than earlier in the plan process. It is also helpful if the Inspector can have a copy of the database (frozen at a specific date).

Meetings with other representors / Statements of Common Ground

The Inspector notes that in response to some representations the Council intends to have further discussions with the Representor(s) with a view to producing a Statement of Common Ground.

Could the Council please confirm when these Statements are likely to be completed?

Hearings

The Inspector will produce guidance notes to outline the nature of the hearing sessions. Please note that only those representors who seek some change to the plan can request an oral hearing. There is no formal presentation of evidence or cross-examination; the procedure is an inquisitorial process, with the inspector asking questions based on the Matters and Issues identified for Examination. The Council and representors will have the opportunity to provide responses to the Inspector's Matters and Issues, to be submitted approximately 2-3 weeks before the hearings commence. There is no need for any legal representation, but lawyers are welcome as a member of a team.

Core Evidence base

The Inspector has received the Submission Documents and Evidence-based Documents.

Is any other substantial work / reports likely to be undertaken for the examination, and if so, what is the timetable for such work?

A link to all the Submission and Evidence-based Documents should also be provided on the Council's web-site.

The Inspector notes that the Council are currently finalising a Draft District wide Infrastructure Delivery Plan which has been used to inform the preparation of the Plan. **When will this document be complete? What stage had this document reached at the time that the Site Allocations and Policies DPD and Kidderminster AAP were published? Have there been any material changes to the document since which may have implications for the soundness of the plan?**

Similarly, when will the Sequential Testing (Flooding) reports be finalised? What stage had this document reached when at the time that the Site Allocations and Policies DPD and Kidderminster AAP were published? Have there been any material changes to the document since which may have implications for the soundness of the plan?

The Inspector would like an initial response to these questions by 10 December 2012.