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Wigan Town Hall
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Our reference: MW/DL
Your reference:
Please ask for: Mike Worden
Extension: 89104
Direct line: 01942 489104
Date: 21 March 2013

Dear Mr Ward

Wigan Core Strategy – Modifications in respect of housing land supply

Thank you for your letter of 14 March setting out your position following the recent additional hearing sessions on the Core Strategy.

I am pleased that you have indicated that you are in a position to recommend modifications to make the plan sound. As we have stressed consistently, having an adopted Core Strategy is crucial to achieving regeneration of the borough. It is essential that we have an up-to-date planning framework in place. As such the council has previously requested that you recommend modifications that will make the plan sound, and this remains our position. The council does not wish to withdraw the plan.

I am also pleased that you agree with us that the release of Green Belt land for housing would be inappropriate.

It is disappointing however that you do not share our view about densities and the rate of development on sites. These significantly affect the amount of land needed to meet our housing needs. Evidence presented at the examination shows that on the majority of sites, densities are likely to be significantly above the 33 dwellings per hectare benchmark used.

It is also disappointing that you have concluded that development should be divided equally between Golborne / Lowton and Standish. This level of development in both settlements gives rise to uncertainty. There is a strong prospect of a large number of planning applications being submitted in those areas in the short term to meet the five year supply, but with total capacities being far greater than 1,000 homes at each location. In this regard I am concerned that there is a tension between the Core Strategy giving sufficient guidance for the determination of those planning applications in advance of a detailed development plan, and the modifications that would be needed giving rise to objections that warrant further hearing sessions before the Core Strategy can be adopted. Nevertheless, modifications for that intervening period will be needed in order to assist in the determination of those planning applications.

With that matter particularly in mind, I look forward to liaising with you through the

Programme Officer in order to prepare the detailed wording of modifications for sustainability appraisal and consultation. You will anticipate that we wish to do this in as short a time period as is both practicable and possible, in order to have an adopted Core Strategy in place against which to progress our detailed development plans and determine planning applications.

I hope the above comments are helpful to the way forward.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Worden', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

pp Mike Worden
Head of Planning and Transport