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Subject: Wigan Core Strategy Examination: Update
Date: 13 March 2012 14:59:41
Attachments: [Attachment 1.doc](#)
[Attachment 2.doc](#)

Dear all,

Following the close of the hearing sessions in February the Inspector has been reviewing the evidence presented. An additional hearing session to consider the procedural and practical implications of potential changes to the submitted plan has been arranged to address the supply of housing land. This will take place on **Wednesday 18th April 2012** and will be held at **Wigan Investment Centre**.

As a participant in one of the sessions (Matter 1, 4, 6, 7b or 7c) you are invited to take part in this hearing. Please let me know as soon as possible if it is your intention to participate.

For your information I have attached a letter that the Inspector has sent to the Council informing them of this session and a copy of the agenda. Please make note of the deadline for written statements of 5pm on Tuesday 3rd April should you wish to submit one.

The session will focus on the points set out in the agenda. Other matters of soundness that were discussed during the hearing sessions will not be covered and the Inspector feels that he is currently unable to proceed with his report until this matter has been resolved.

If you do not wish to participate and you will not be attending to observe the session you will be informed of the outcome once it has taken place. If you have any further queries before then, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards
Rachel

Rachel Huxtable
Programme Officer
Wigan LDF Core Strategy Development Plan Document

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Wigan Local Development Framework
Core Strategy Development Plan Document
Public Examination

LDF Programme Officer

Wigan Town Hall

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Wigan WN1 1YN

Tel: 01942 487321

Date: 14 March 2012

Dear Mr Worden,

Wigan Core Strategy Examination: Additional hearing session

Please see the below letter from the Inspector regarding the next steps of the examination:

'Having taken account of the evidence before me, written submissions and the discussions at the hearing sessions I consider that there is a significant issue with the soundness of the submitted Core Strategy in terms of the implications for the realistic delivery of sufficient housing.

Even without extending the plan period or taking account of the under-provision of housing since 2003 compared with the RS requirements, I consider that the Core Strategy would not realistically provide for 15,000 net additional dwellings up to 2026. I have significant concerns with a number of the assumptions made by the Council in seeking to demonstrate an adequate supply of housing land (Table 1 of Doc CS28). In summary:

- *No account is taken of the need to replace cleared dwellings.*
- *There is insufficient justification for the inclusion of a significant windfall allowance in the first ten years of the plan period.*
- *The supply would rely on the development of a significant number of dwellings South of Atherton even though this is not identified as a broad location for development.*
- *The anticipated annual rates of development at Northleigh, South of Hindley, East of Atherton and South of Atherton are very optimistic and in my view unrealistic when seen together given the overlap in phasing and close proximity of sites and the potential market.*
- *The supply relies on a number of other SHLAA sites which appear to have significant constraints and/or infrastructure requirements.*

Realistically there would be no flexibility and indeed a significant shortfall of housing land compared with the requirement of an average of 1,000 dwellings per annum which the Council itself considers necessary. There would appear little if any scope to increase supply further within the East West Core. On this basis, the shortfall would have to be met through releasing significant amounts of land in other parts of the Borough and/or considering a review of Green Belt land.

I do not consider that there is evidence in place to properly consider potential alternative solutions to the issue of housing supply. Additional work would be required to gather evidence, assess options and consult stakeholders. I am concerned that this would be a substantial piece of work which may well take some time. It also would involve to some extent taking a step back in the process to look at options.

I am also very concerned that the nature and extent of necessary changes to the Core Strategy would result in a plan substantially different to that submitted in terms of the role of the East West Core, the approach to the distribution of housing, the use of safeguarded land and the implications for particular communities.

In overall terms I have significant reservations about embarking on such a process at this stage.

Given the potential significance of the situation an additional hearing session has now been arranged to allow the Council and relevant participants the opportunity to put forward views as to whether the situation regarding housing land supply could be resolved, if so how this could be done and the procedural and practical implications of doing so. I must emphasise that the session is not designed to re-examine detailed matters already discussed in writing or at previous hearing sessions.

The additional one day hearing session will begin at 9.30am on Wednesday 18th April 2012 and will be held in the Wigan Investment Centre. Those representors who were involved in the sessions on Matters 1, 4, 6, 7B and 7C will be invited to participate. The session will be open to the public to observe.

I have attached an agenda for the session. Written statements from the Council and others participating should be submitted to the Programme Officer by no later than 5pm on Tuesday 3rd April 2012.

In terms of other matters of soundness I am not able to proceed with my report or recommend modifications until this key issue is resolved.'

Yours sincerely

R. Huxtable

Rachel Huxtable
Programme Officer
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Wigan Core Strategy Examination

**Additional hearing session:
Addressing the shortfall in housing supply – procedural and practical
implications**

9.30 am Wednesday 18th April 2012 (all day)

AGENDA

1. Introduction and context for the session

- Summary of Inspector's concerns in relation to housing supply
- Outline of Inspector's concerns regarding practical and procedural implications of seeking to address the shortfall

2. Is it possible to address the shortfall?

- In principle?
- What are the potential options?
 - Safeguarded land in the ELRC
 - Safeguarded land elsewhere e.g. Standish
 - Release of Green Belt land
 - Some combination of the above
 - Other options?

3. Additional work required

- Evidence gathering
- Assessment of options
- Consultation with local communities and other stakeholders
- Sustainability Appraisal
- How long would this work take?
- Is the Council willing and able to undertake such work?

4. Procedural implications

- Is it legitimate to undertake this work at this stage in the process?
- Would it in effect be taking a step back in the process to look at options to accommodate housing growth?
- Would the changes necessary result in a substantially different plan to that submitted?
 - The role of the EW Core within the Borough and the policy position relative to other areas
 - How would such changes affect the spatial strategy?
 - How would they affect the distribution of housing?
 - How would the approach to safeguarded land be affected?
 - How would particular parts of the Borough/individual settlements potentially be affected differently?
- Overall, would the nature and extent of changes required and the process involved be beyond the legitimate scope of an examination into a submitted plan?
- Should the plan be withdrawn?
- What would be the implications of withdrawing the plan?