

Examination of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan – Single Issue Review

Inspector: Philip Lewis BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

Programme Officer: Emily Howard email: Programme.Officer@eastcamb.gov.uk

phone:01353 616382

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Richard Kay

Strategic Planning Manager

East Cambridgeshire District Council

Dear Mr Kay

Examination of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan – Single Issue Review

Thank you for your letter of 17 January 2023.

As you are aware, a local planning authority must not submit a plan unless they think it is ready for independent examination, and only submit a plan if they consider it to be sound and that there will not be long delays during the examination because significant changes or further evidence work are required.

You have suggested what would be a significant change to the submitted plan at this late stage in the examination, by rebasing housing need and the requirement to April 2022 and setting a dwelling requirement for the period to 2031 derived from the standard method. Nevertheless, as it is possible it might be a sound approach, I should consider it further. To do so, I invite the Council to prepare a topic paper setting out why its suggested approach is sound, and I will hold a further hearing session on this matter.

The topic paper should include:

- The detailed calculation of local housing need using the standard method consistent with the guidance set out in national Planning Policy Guidance;
- The rationale for setting the dwelling requirement derived from the minimum local housing need as established by the standard method;
- An explanation of why the Council considers that the Plan so amended should be found sound despite amended strategic policy GROWTH1 not looking ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption in respect of housing as per paragraph 22 of the National Planning Policy Framework;
- A consideration of the implications, if any, for the sustainability appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Plan; and
- A schedule of suggested main modifications necessary to make the submitted Plan sound. Those should also include those relating to broad areas of search and the housing trajectory as set out in my post hearings advice, along with the update of paragraph 3.5.7 and table 3.2 following the update of housing statistics as set out in EX.LA02.

I appreciate that some of the above evidence is already before me in various examination documents, but it would be helpful to me and to representors if it could be drawn together in the topic paper. In my post hearings advice letter, I have been clear on a number of matters, including whether economic growth factors indicate that there is a higher level of housing need than the standard method indicates. I have all the evidence I need on such matters, and I shall not revisit those in the further hearing.

Following receipt of the topic paper, I will prepare matters, issues and questions for a focused hearing session. Statements will be invited from the Council and representors.

I envisage holding the further hearing session in March and I will liaise with you via the Programme Officer as to the detailed timing and arrangements for the event.

Please publish this letter on the examination website. I am not seeking the views of any other party at this stage and do not envisage accepting correspondence on this matter.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Philip Lewis

INSPECTOR