

Notes of South Holland Local Plan Pre-Inquiry Meeting: 26 October 2005

Introductions

- The meeting opened at 10 o'clock. Mr Brian Rogers introduced himself as the Inspector and referred to the following matters:-
- The Inspector has been appointed by the First Secretary of State to hold an Inquiry into objections to the South Holland Local Plan, assisted by Inspector Robert Sexton. Following the close of the Inquiry, the Inspector will prepare a binding report to the Council with the required changes to be made by the Council in respect of each objection.
- Mr Peter Chapman has been appointed as Programme Officer for the Inquiry and all communications should be addressed via him in the first instance. His office is located in Interview Room 5, on the first floor. The principal functions of the Programme Officer are to organise the Inquiry programme, to ensure that all documents received before and during the Inquiry are recorded and distributed and to maintain the Inquiry library. He will ensure that copying facilities are available to objectors.
- During the Inquiry, Mr Chapman will be able to tell you how closely we are following the Inquiry programme. Full details will be posted on the Inquiry notice board, which will be in the reception foyer and on the Council's web site (www.sholland.gov.uk). It is the objectors' responsibility to liaise with Mr Chapman to ensure they are available to present their case when called.
- Mr Robert Lewis, a Barrister, is acting as the Council's advocate. A full list of the Council's witnesses, together with their area of responsibility, will be posted on the Inquiry notice board and the web site. Objectors are strongly encouraged to contact the relevant officer to discuss, and hopefully resolve, any outstanding issues prior to the Inquiry.

The Inquiry

- The Inquiry itself will open at 10 am on Thursday 5 January in the Council Chamber. It will usually sit between 10 am and 5 pm from Tuesdays to Thursdays and from 10 am to 1 pm on Fridays. There will usually be a 1 hour lunch break.
- A draft Inquiry programme will be prepared as soon as the responses from the objectors have been received. The Inquiry will begin with Round Table Sessions. It appears likely that Inquiry will then sit for a further 2 weeks before a 1 week break to allow participants to take stock of the situation. The final duration of the Inquiry is not yet known. If any gaps appear in the programme, the Inspectors will use the time to carry out site visits or to undertake preparation work.

Inquiry procedure

- The attention of those unfamiliar with the Local Plan Inquiry procedure was drawn to the notes explaining the procedure. Copies were made available at the meeting and further copies are available from the Programme Officer.
- At the opening of the Inquiry, the Council will be invited to make a brief opening statement outlining the context of the Plan and confirming that the statutory procedures have been followed. The position regarding objections which have been withdrawn or conditionally

withdrawn should be indicated. Finally, the background documentation relied upon by the Council, or "core documents", should be formally introduced to the Inquiry. A list of these accompanies these notes and the documents are available via the Programme Officer.

- The Council indicated it has advertised Pre-Inquiry Changes to the Plan and requested the Inspector to take these in to account.
- If the Council agrees to any changes during the course of the Inquiry, these "Inquiry Changes" will be kept together in a loose leaf format, and will form a core document.
- Henceforth, the terms "the South Holland Local Plan, "the Local Plan", or "the Plan" will refer to the **2005 Redeposit Version** of the plan. The Inspector will, however, be considering objections to the First Deposit Draft` which have not been resolved by the Redeposit version.

Round Table Sessions

- The Council has indicated a number of matters that could best be addressed by holding Round Table Sessions. Relevant objectors will be invited to participate, although the sessions will be open to all to attend. A list of the matters to be discussed accompanies this note.

Objections to be heard at the Inquiry

- There will be no Formal Inquiry sessions, unless they can be justified as exceptions.
- The normal procedure will be for Hearings to be held in a more informal setting around a table. The Inspector will briefly set out the matters at issue and will lead a structured discussion which will enable the objectors' cases and the Council's cases to be understood. Questions may be asked and cross-examination will be permitted, where appropriate.
- Where a number of objections have been made in respect of the same policy, topic or site, it may be beneficial for objectors to present a joint case. This would save repetition and be more efficient of Inquiry time. The Programme Officer has a list of objectors by topic, if objectors are interested in combining resources.
- Cases should be presented as concisely as possible. Overruns into other objectors' allotted times will not be permitted and this could result in objectors having to come back later in the programme.

Written objections

- It was explained that written objections carry just as much weight as those presented orally. The Council is obliged to respond to each written objection and the objector then has a right of reply. If the Inspector sees the need for further clarification, he will write to the parties via the Programme Officer.

Timetable for the submission of proofs

- **Round Table Sessions**
- 6 copies of any paper submitted by participants on one of the identified topics should be with the Programme Officer by noon on Friday 25 November.
- The Council's response should be with the Programme Officer by noon on Friday 9 December.

- **Inquiry appearances**
- 6 copies of the objectors' proofs and supporting documents should be deposited with the Programme Officer no later than noon on Friday 25 November.
- The Council's rebuttal proofs must be with the Programme Officer no later than noon on Friday 16 December.
- The importance of continuing dialogue with the Council was stressed to see if some or all of the objections can be resolved. That will allow the Inquiry to focus on matters still in dispute. Any agreed factual matters should be presented as a statement of agreed facts.
- **Written cases**
- Objectors may choose to rely on their original written submission. However, anyone who wishes to add to their original objection should do so not later than noon on Friday 25 November. 6 copies are required.
- The Council should respond to each objection by the opening date of the Inquiry and objectors will have a further 2 weeks to comment, should they wish to do so.
- **Supporting representations**
- Supporting representations will be taken fully into account by the Inspector. Although those who have made such representations may attend the Inquiry, they will not be entitled to present their case orally.

Format of submissions

- Any material submitted to the Inquiry should preferably be of A4 size or folded to A4 size.
- Pages and paragraphs should be numbered
- Only metric dimensions must be used, except for speed limits measured in miles per hour.
- All submissions should be clearly labelled with the objection reference number which has been allocated to that particular objection.
- If anyone wishes to use slides or a powerpoint presentation, they should contact the Programme Officer in advance to check whether compatible equipment is available.
- The Council intends to produce general topic papers on:
The Core Strategy;
Housing Land; and
Employment Land
- These will be labeled as core documents and are now available in the Inquiry library or on the web site.
- It is vital that, wherever possible, data put before the Inquiry are usable and comparable. For example, common base dates should be used. The onus will be on **objectors** to liaise with the Council to ensure that this occurs.

- Proofs should be as concise as possible, and in any event no more than 3,000 words. Proofs should not reproduce extracts from Planning Policy Guidance Notes, or other Inquiry core documents. Evidence will be assessed on its quality, not its weight!
- It was stressed that each objector must make crystal clear the modification to the Plan which is sought, including the exact wording, where appropriate, and which would satisfy the objection.

Site inspections

- The Inspectors will be making a series of unaccompanied site inspections at various times before, during and after the Inquiry. If there are sites which cannot be seen from publicly accessible viewpoints, or objectors consider an accompanied site visit to be essential, please let the Programme Officer know.
- It was stressed that there will be no discussion of the merits of the case during any accompanied site visit; the purpose of the visit is purely to establish the features which exist on the ground.

Photo-copying

- The Council indicated that the following charges for photo-copies would apply:

1-20 sheets	-	free
20-50 sheets	-	£5
50+ sheets	-	£10

