



The Planning Inspectorate

Date: 4 September 2014
Ref: PINS/P1805/429/2

To:
Mr Mike Dunphy
Strategic Planning Manager
Bromsgrove District Council
The Council House
Burcot Lane
Bromsgrove,
Worcestershire, B60 1AA

Dear Mr Dunphy

PLANNING & COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004 (AS AMENDED) EXAMINATION OF THE BROMSGROVE DISTRICT PLAN

1. Thank you for your letter, received on 1 September 2014, which attached a copy of the Amion Housing Needs Assessment report dated 29 August 2014.
2. Given that other parties have not had the opportunity to comment on this document, it would be inappropriate for me to take a view on its contents at the present stage. However, I agree with you that there is merit in resuming the examination hearings in order to allow this matter to be discussed in more detail.
3. In order to avoid unnecessary delay to the overall examination, I also agree with you that all of the sessions (including cross-border sessions in respect of meeting the housing needs of the Borough of Redditch) should now be programmed. The Programme Officer (PO) has already been in contact with your office to arrange suitable times and venues: I shall publish a revised hearings programme in due course. In the meantime, the new Amion report should be placed on the examination website: given that interested parties will have the opportunity to comment in any pre-hearing statements, there is no need to undertake a specific consultation exercise in respect of this document.
4. Notwithstanding my comments above, I must however raise a concern about the approach that you suggest in paragraph 9 of your covering letter – namely your view that I should ‘suggest modifications to the BDP to specify exactly what the objective assessment of housing need figure should be for the period 2011-2030’. It is clear from the National Planning Policy Framework and national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) that it is the responsibility of the local planning authority to undertake the

housing needs assessment exercise. Paragraph 159 of the Framework requires Councils to 'have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area' with reference to various relevant factors – which, as set out in the PPG, include reference to market signals. As you will be aware, I would only recommend modifications to the BDP in this (or any other) regard if (1) formally requested to do so under section 20(7C) of the Act and (2) if necessary for soundness and/or legal compliance reasons.

5. Accordingly, it is necessary for your Council to set out a more explicit view of what it considers to be its objectively assessed housing needs figure. It would assist both my own considerations and the transparency of the examination process as a whole if an early response could be given in respect of this matter. This should be submitted in advance of the deadline for the submission of pre-hearing statements, which is yet to be finalised.
6. If you have any queries on the above, please let me know via the PO. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

M J Hetherington

INSPECTOR