

Please contact: Brian McCutcheon
Our ref: BM/LDF/Exam
Your ref:
Date: 8 March 2013

Medway Core Strategy Inspector
C/o Programme Officer
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham
Kent ME4 4TR

Housing Development and Transport Division
Regeneration, Community and Culture Directorate
Medway Council
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham
Kent ME4 4TR
Telephone: 01634 306000
Direct line: 01634 331149
Email: brian.mccutcheon@medway.gov.uk

By Email Only

Dear Inspector,

Medway Core Strategy Examination

Thank you for your letter dated 7 March concerning this matter and I am pleased to be able to set out the Council's response below.

I should advise that the date for completion of the final Addendum SA report of 4th March was given in good faith and it reflected the best estimate of the consultant's of the work required at the time. In the event rather more responses to the public consultation were received than expected. This was largely due to a public campaign by the RSPB via its website, resulting in 76 responses associated with that campaign and 20 others.

In response to your letter we have again spoken to the consultant's to see whether they can be confident of completing their final report before 15th March. It is understood that they are making good progress but equally it is important that the work is thoroughly carried out. Given this the situation, as of today, is as follows:

- We can supply electronic versions of all representations received immediately
- The consultants expect to provide the Council with its final draft by early on 14th March
- This would give the Council that day to undertake a final fact check and approve the report. I therefore anticipate being able to provide it to the Programme Officer by close of play that day.

It is fully appreciated that this would give you limited time to consider it in detail before needing to issue your matters and questions on 15th March to feed into a hearing date of 1st May. However we do feel that considering the representations alongside the draft Addendum report would allow all relevant issues to be identified.

In proposing this approach to you we are seeking to avoid further delay to an already protracted examination timetable while, at the same time, fully appreciating the need for proper rigour and fairness to all parties.

In relation to the revocation of the South East Plan we would make the following points:

- All the material submitted to the Examination by the Council sought to anticipate revocation during the proceedings and so our response to the matter is, I hope, already clear to all parties

This information is available in other formats and languages from Ann Gardner on 01634 331541

- During the course of the hearings in June last year it was clear from a number of discussions that other participants were also well aware of this likelihood and framed their own responses accordingly
- We are aware that the same issue arose at a reconvened Examination this week (5th March) into the Shepway Core Strategy. In that case the Inspector has given participants two weeks to make representations on the matter and I understand that the Programme Officer is about to issue a similar letter on your behalf.

Given this we would hope that a further hearing into the revocation is not necessarily a pre-requisite but at the same time entirely respect the fact that this is a matter for you.

I hope that this response is helpful. The Council's clear preference is for the further hearing to proceed on 1 May as currently advised on the website but we will, of course, fully respect your decision on the matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian McCutcheon', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Brian McCutcheon
Planning Policy & Design Manager