



Mr J. Bridgwater
Planning Inspector
(by email)

Please reply to:
Contact: Daniel Mouawad
Chief Executive
Direct line: 01784 446350
Email: DCM.CEX@spelthorne.gov.uk
Our ref:
Date: 6 March 2024

Dear Mr Bridgwater

Spelthorne Local Plan Examination

I write to advise you of the current progress we are making in order to resume the Examination in Public for Spelthorne's new Local Plan.

You have kindly provided us with two pauses to the examination hearings, which have allowed for our newer Members to understand more about the Local Plan, for a Critical Friend review and latterly to await the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework.

I understand you were provided with a copy of the report, via the Programme Officer, to the Environment & Sustainability Committee meeting that took place on Thursday 29 February. That report set out options for considering modification to the Local Plan before the examination resumes, covering the themes of Green Belt allocations, flood risk sites and the Staines Development Framework. The Committee decided on the options for these themes as follows:

- Remove all Green Belt allocations from the Local Plan with the exception of the two allocations that meet the need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople
- Keep all proposed flood risk sites but remove those at high risk of flooding and move some high-risk sites to later in the Plan period (11-15 years) to allow for the River Thames Scheme to be operational and effective, the design code to be completed and subject to no resolute objection from the Environment Agency
- Withdraw the Staines Development Framework as a core document

Spelthorne Council fully recognises that modification of the Local Plan at this stage rests with yourself as Inspector and that we are simply requesting that you give consideration to the changes set out above, and in light of the justification within the committee report. We would be happy to provide you with any further information or evidence to enable you to decide whether these proposals can be accepted and discussed further through the hearing sessions once the examination resumes.

In respect of the flood risk sites, we were awaiting a decision of the Council on which sites we wished to see retained in the Local Plan, with appropriate mitigation and intervention, plus an updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment from our consultants, AECOM, and further engagement with the Environment Agency. Now that we have the resolution last week from the Committee, I can advise you of the next steps we are undertaking before you have the necessary information to consider resuming the hearings (please note that the dates are estimates when outside of the Council's control):

Action	Timescale	Date
Revised SFRA Level 1 and 2 delivered by AECOM		Friday 22 March
Comments back from EA (Subject to the Thames not flooding)	6 weeks	Friday 3 May
AECOM to make any amendments or corrections (Estimate, dependent on comments received from the EA)	2 weeks	Friday 17 May
Final comments from EA	2 weeks or 21 days	Friday 31 May or Friday 7 June
Write to Inspector with final EA comments		w/c 3 June or w/c 10 June

We wish to offer our continued assurance that Spelthorne wishes to have a Local Plan in place at the earliest opportunity and that we are taking the necessary steps in order to progress the Plan back to examination.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Malcolm Beecher
Chair of Environment & Sustainability Committee