

Strategic Planning Directorate

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Your reference:

Our reference: MUDC DPS Sub1

23 December 2021

Dear Dr Boomer

MUDC draft Plan Strategy Submission

I am writing in relation to the Council's draft Plan Strategy submission which was made to the Department on 29th May 2021. I also wish to acknowledge your recent correspondence of 5th November in which you queried the Department's progression of the Council's submission.

Following the Department's consideration of the Council's submission, there are a number of aspects of the submission which the Department is seeking further clarification on. It may be helpful if I broadly set out how the Department considers submissions made by Councils' at this point in the process.

The Council submitted its development plan document and other associated documentation to the Department under section 10(1) and 10(3) of the Planning Act. In doing so the Council has confirmed under Section 10(2) that it has complied with requirements contained in the Regulations and it considers that the development plan document is ready for Independent Examination.

In more recent correspondence on the 29th November the Council stated that the Department's representation has been taken into account as part of the submission. It is however, in the Department's oversight role that clarification is being sought at this time.

Under s. 10(4) the Department must, unless it intends to make a direction under section 11(2) or 15(1) of the 2011 Act, cause an IE to be carried out. To establish whether an IE should be caused, an overview of the submission material is undertaken.

There are broadly three aspects to the overview; whether the development plan document has been prepared in accordance with relevant procedures; whether there are any fundamental issues which appear to undermine the implementation of the RDS/SPPS; and whether there are obvious gaps in the evidence base.

The Department must ensure that on balance there is sufficient and satisfactory information to enable the PAC to undertake an IE, in matters of process and procedure.

It is important to note that this overview is not a first sift of an assessment of soundness which is the remit of the PAC/Independent Examiner. Furthermore in the event that the Department causes an IE, it is made clear that this is not a determination on the soundness of the DPD.

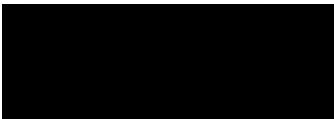
The Department seeks this clarification to confirm how the Council have considered certain aspects of the Plan with reference to the evidence provided in the submission. In reviewing the documentation submitted by the Council, the Department seeks clarification in relation to a number of aspects as set out in the Appendices to this letter under the following areas; Legal/Procedural; Housing/HGI; Economic Development and Development in the Countryside as it is acknowledged that these are important strategic elements of the draft Plan Strategy.

The Department is mindful however that on receipt of any submission or clarification - any further consideration of these aspects at this stage of the process would not be appropriate as this is the purpose of the IE under Section 10 (6) of the Act.

I appreciate that carrying out this overview of the Council's submission has taken longer than initially anticipated, however, pending your response the Department will progress with consideration promptly.

This letter has been copied to Katrina Godfrey and Adrian McCreesh for information.

Yours sincerely



ALISTAIR BEGGS
Director of Strategic Planning

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APPENDIX 1 – CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS - HOUSING SECTION

APPENDIX 2 – CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ADDITIONAL IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

APPENDIX 3 – CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS ON RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

APPENDIX 4 – CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS ON LEGAL/PROCEDURAL COMPLIANCE