

Sent via email to the Programme Officer

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<http://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/7660/Preliminary-Matters---Correspondence>)

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Dear Claire Sherratt,

**RE: Inspector's Initial Comments / Questions of 24 September 2013**

I am writing to you on behalf of Fenland District Council in response to your letter dated 24 September 2013. Please see below our response to each of your questions.

Representations

All the representations we received are available on the website. For those submitted at the original Proposed Submission Stage (February 2013), they are available via <http://fenland.newgrove.com/App/DiscussIt/?docId=3465>, whilst the very limited number of representations received at the 'Proposed Addendum' stage are available at <http://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/7421/Addendum-to-Proposed-Submission-Version-2013>. We consider all representations received, published on our website and submitted to you, to be 'duly made'.

We did not receive any 'late representations'.

Database

You are aware that we are preparing a separate database, to complement the above, which will have filter capabilities in order to highlight precisely which representors and representations are linked to specific parts of the plan, together with clarity over whether or not they wish to attend the hearing sessions.

This database is almost complete and, therefore, sometime next week the Programme Officer will be in a position to produce for you a schedule of representations on a policy by policy basis, together with an indication who wishes to attend the hearing sessions.

Meeting with Representors / Statements of Common Ground

**Q1.** *The Inspector notes that a Statement of Common Ground is to be prepared between the Council, the Highways Agency and other highway authorities,*

*(a) When is this likely to be available?*

The Statement of Common Ground has been completed and is only awaiting signoff by Cambridgeshire County Council. By early next week, we will publish the Statement with a reference number CD013. The Statement will confirm precisely who has agreed to it.

*(b) Is it the Council's intention to have any further discussions with representors? If so, could the Council please confirm when any statements are likely to be completed?*

The Council is currently in discussions with Cambridgeshire County Council to resolve their issues as set out in their representation. The conclusions of these discussions may be presented in the form of a Statement of Common Ground between the two Councils. If so, this should be available by mid-October. The primary aim of such a Statement will be to enable Cambridgeshire County Council to withdraw a significant number of their objections.

We are not currently actively discussing issues with other representors, though we are happy to enter into any additional statements of common ground should this be helpful. We will reconsider this once the Inspector has published the list of issues for the hearing sessions.

Core Evidence base

**Q2.** *Is any other substantial work/reports likely to be undertaken for the examination, and if so, what is the timetable for such work?*

There are two reports which, in the examination period, should be published.

First, an update to the Authorities' Monitoring Report (AMR), to cover the period 2012/13, is due to be published and added as a supplementary evidence document prior to the commencement of the hearings. At the very latest, it will be published before the end of December 2013, but more likely in November.

Second, a Fenland only update to the 2011 county-wide GATNA is being prepared. This update is due for consideration by Fenland Cabinet on 21 November 2013 (papers published around 14 November). Whilst I do not want to pre-judge the findings of this update, it appears likely, on preliminary work on it, that it will show a limited increase in the need for pitches (up from our current 2011 GATNA need of 2 pitches) but also show that recent unimplemented permissions for pitches should be of a similar quantum. We will, of course, update you in due course on this matter.

### Dealing with Changes to the Local Plan

**Q3.** *Please give an indication of the Council's position on main modifications?*

The Council recognises the advantages of establishing a position on main modifications early in the examination process. As such, we hereby request, in accordance with section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), that should the Inspector deem main modifications to be required for soundness/legal compliance reasons, such modifications be made. We note that, where appropriate, such proposed modifications should be subject to the same process of publicity and opportunity to make representation as the Plan. We will be happy to facilitate this consultation, should it be necessary.

We have now almost completed our first schedule of proposed minor modifications, and intend to publish such a schedule on our website library tomorrow (Friday 27 September), with a reference number CD002(a). We do not believe any of these modifications need to be subject to the formal examination process and we acknowledge that the Council is accountable on adoption for the scope of these minor changes. However, as the majority of these changes are in response to representations received on the plan, we respectfully requested that you review the list, partly so that you can see which representations may be resolved by such a change. In addition, it would be very helpful to the Council if you could notify the Council of any proposed changes listed in the schedule which, in the Inspector's view, may be more than 'minor' and as such would be more appropriately dealt with as a 'main' modification.

### Duration of Hearings

**Q4.** *Given the number of representors who wish to be heard and the issues raised, how many days do you anticipate will be required for the Hearing sessions?*

As set out in the Statement of Consultation (CD006), we received around 440 representations, from about 185 separate consultees. Around half of these relate to the single issue of the March North East allocation (an allocation now deleted, via the Addendum consultation). As you will see, the plan itself only has 19 policies, and many of these received very few representations at all.

The Council therefore anticipates that no more than four or five days will be required for the formal hearing sessions. This should allow sufficient time for issues related to district-wide matters to be discussed (perhaps two-three days) plus issues relating to each of the four market towns to be discussed (perhaps two days).

I trust this letter helpfully answers your initial questions, but I am very happy to provide further clarification as required.

Yours sincerely

Richard Kay  
Neighbourhood Strategy Manager