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The Chief Executive
Cotswold District Council
Trinity Road
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Your Ref:

Our Ref: DP 492

Date:

Dear Sir

PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO OBJECTIONS TO THE DEPOSIT DRAFT OF THE COTSWOLD DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN 2001-2011

I was appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to hold a Public Inquiry into objections to the Deposit Draft of the Cotswold District Local Plan 2001-2011 ('the Local Plan'). The Inquiry was held between 6 April and 23 September 2004, sitting on 37 days. A Pre-Inquiry Meeting to discuss procedural matters was held on 12 January 2004. Before, during and after the Inquiry I made a series of accompanied and unaccompanied site visits to all of the sites and areas that were the subject of objections.

As I announced at the opening of the Inquiry, a Planning Officer employed by the Planning Inspectorate was appointed to assist me during the Inquiry and with my report. He attended the Inquiry on one day only but, due to a change in circumstances beyond his and my control, subsequently took no further part in the Inquiry and had no involvement with my report.

The Local Plan comprises a Written Statement setting out the overall strategy which is carried forward by means of objectives and policies for the main land use topics and areas, and a Proposals Map with Inset Maps for each town and main village and certain other areas. Policies are interrelated and the Plan should thus be read as a whole. An errata sheet indicating corrections to the Plan was, the Council assured me, issued within each copy of the Written Statement. I have considered the Plan on the basis that those corrections have already been made.

In October 2002 Gloucestershire County Council issued a Statement of Conformity confirming that the First Deposit Local Plan is in general conformity with the adopted Gloucestershire Structure Plan Second Alteration. In September 2003 a further certificate was issued in respect of the Revised Deposit Local Plan.

The Plan was placed on first deposit from 9 January to 20 February 2003. Representations were received from 247 organisations and individuals, producing 1652 objections to the Plan. There were also 181 representations of support and



4 express indications of 'no objection' or 'no comment', to which the Council has asked me to have regard.

Following consideration of the objections to the First Deposit Plan, the Council published a Revised Deposit Plan incorporating numerous proposed changes. I have been assured by the Council that a supplementary errata sheet was published with it and, although some objectors seem to have been unaware of this, I have taken the Plan as incorporating it. This Plan was placed on deposit from 18 September to 30 October 2003. As a result, 10 objections to the First Deposit Plan were withdrawn conditional upon the Plan being changed as proposed by the Council, and a further 507 representations were made. Of these 453 were objections, and there were 49 representations of support and 5 express indications of 'no objection' or 'no comment' to which I have again been asked to have regard. Prior to and during the course of the Inquiry 262 objections were unconditionally withdrawn; the matters they raised are thus no longer before me and I do not deal with them in my Report.

Thus there were 1838¹ objections outstanding at the close of the Inquiry. Of these, 534 were the subject of Inquiry sessions and the remaining 1304 proceeded through written representations. I would mention here that while the Council termed some objections 'de minimus', I have considered all duly-made objections on their merits.

In my consideration of all objections I have had regard to submissions made orally and/or in writing by or on behalf of the various objectors and the Council, and to all other material considerations including current Government policy and guidance where appropriate. I have considered the full range of issues raised in respect of every objection, though not all are referred to directly. I have also had regard to those representations in support and those indicating no objection to the Plan, though I generally do not refer to them explicitly in my report.

I have not had regard to any changes in local planning circumstances subsequent to my closing the Inquiry as I have not received representations thereon. The Council will need to take any such changes into account in its consideration of my recommendations.

Unless otherwise stated, reference to Government policy and guidance as set out in Circulars or PPGs relates to the versions which were extant at the close of the Inquiry. This includes Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7: *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas*, which was in draft during most of the Inquiry and published in final form in August 2004.

The Council will need to have regard to any subsequent revisions to Government policy which may occur prior to the adoption of the Plan. These include (but are not confined to) two Housing Updates to Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 3: *Housing*, entitled '*Supporting the Delivery of New Housing*' and '*Planning for Sustainable Communities in Rural Areas*', both published in January 2005; Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 : '*Delivering Sustainable Development*' (February 2005) and PPS 6 : '*Planning for Town Centres*' (March 2005).

As far as is practicable my report follows the sequential layout of the Plan. Chapters 1-12 of the report relate to the same numbered chapters in the Plan. My chapter 0 addresses general matters relating to the whole Plan, and chapter 13 deals with objections regarding the proposals and inset maps that have not been addressed elsewhere. In each case I present the relevant objections and the main

¹ Including the 'conditional withdrawals', which still stand as objections.

issues arising from them before setting out my reasoning and conclusions, and my recommendations.

Main Issues

The main policy issues in my report concern the District development strategy, in particular the amount of land allocated for housing development and its distribution, together with the major site-specific allocations on previously-used (or 'brownfield') and greenfield land. I have concluded that the overall quantum and broad distribution of housing provision is appropriate and generally consistent with national, regional and Structure Plan policy. I have considered the many objections relating to development of specific sites in the light of that conclusion.

Consequential modifications

Attention is drawn to the fact that my recommended modifications to policies in the Plan may also necessitate consequential modifications to supporting text and/or the Proposals and Inset Maps. These consequential modifications are not necessarily noted in my report, and the Council will thus need to identify and incorporate them in the Plan during the final stages of the Plan preparation process.

Inquiry documents

A complete set of documents submitted in connection with the Inquiry is held by Council's Forward Planning Section, and may be inspected at the offices of the Cotswold District Council, Trinity Road, Cirencester, GL7 1PX.

Expressions of gratitude

Finally I wish to express my thanks for the help and co-operation I received throughout the Inquiry. The participants at the Inquiry were almost all helpful, courteous and considerate; the officers of Cotswold District Council and others appearing on its behalf were unfailingly so.

I extend my particular and sincere thanks to my Programme Officer, Christine Self, for her invaluable experience, efficiency, good humoured support and assistance and unstinting hard work before and during the Inquiry. Amongst many other things, she played no small part in ensuring the efficient use of Inquiry time.

Yours faithfully



Inspector

cc: Government Office for the South West, 2 Rivergate, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6EH