Minutes of Pre Hearing Meeting

Held in Committee Room 4 at Uxbridge Civic Centre
Wednesday 11 January 2012 (10.00 – 11.00 am)

Present:

Douglas Machin – Planning Inspectorate
John McDonnell MP – Representing the local community
Councillor Janet Duncan – London Borough of Hillingdon (Yeading Ward)
Andrew Thomson – BNP Paribas Real Estates
Matthew Thomas – Bride Hall Developments Ltd
Setareh Neshati – CGMS Consulting
Chris Hicks – CGMS Consulting
Matt Pochin Hawkes – Capital Shopping Centres
Robin Brown – Hayes and Harlington Community Development Forum
Richard Oakley – Heathrow Airport
Andy Wadham – Heathrow Airport
Miguel Sadler – Heathrow Airport
Alun Davies – Boyer Planning
Carl Neilson – Yiewsley and West Drayton Town Centre Action Group
Ivor Williams – Individual
Fida Jaffer – Individual
David Mackie – Individual
Philip Rumsey – Individual
Veronica Rumsey – Individual
David Brough – The Hayes Town Partnership
John Rout – Individual
Ahmet Moustafa – Warren Park Residents Association
Helen Lowder – Hayes and Harlington Community Development Forum
Dalia Lichfield – Temple Group/Lichfield Planning on behalf of British Airways plc
Duncan Struther – Hillingdon Inter Faith Network
Mark Novelle – Drivers Jonas Deloitte
Brian Whiteley – London Borough of Hillingdon
James Gleave – London Borough of Hillingdon
Shahida Manjla – London Borough of Hillingdon
Mark Stevens – LDF Programme Officer

Apologies
Councillor John Major – London Borough of Hillingdon (Barnhill Ward)
Councillor Lynne Allen – London Borough of Hillingdon (Townfield Ward)
Ms A Jaffer – Individual
Dr Justine Bayley – Individual
Introduction

- The Inspector, Douglas Machin welcomed all to the meeting and introduced himself, announcing that he had been appointed to conduct an Examination into the London Borough of Hillingdon Core Strategy. The Inspector introduced Mark Stevens, the Programme Officer, who is acting as an independent officer under the direction of the Inspector, not as a Council employee. The Hearings will be held at Uxbridge Civic Centre and commence on 13 March 2012.

Purpose of Meeting

- The Inspector outlined that the purpose of the meeting was to explain the procedure for the Examination, and to hear any concerns/questions in respect of the process. He drew attention to the guidance note issued prior to the meeting which can be viewed on the Council’s website at: https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=23510

Localism Act, 2011

- The Inspector explained that section 112 of the Localism Act would take effect on 15 January, 2012. It amends the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 and involves a change from previous practice.

- The starting point is the Submitted Core Strategy and Schedule of Proposed Changes submitted to the Secretary of State in October, 2011. He is still required to ensure that the Core Strategy is legally compliant and sound. (NB the additional duty to co-operate will not be examined as the plan was submitted to the Secretary of State before 15 November 2011). He will make recommendations to the Council for main modifications where necessary to ensure soundness, but the Council has to formally request him to do so.

- The Inspector said that in practice he will consider the evidence submitted to the Examination, and make his report with any recommendations for modifications required, which will then need to be advertised for a period of six weeks by the Council. It may also need to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal for any main modifications. The Inspector will then finalise his report taking into account any further representations that may be made.

- All other matters not related to soundness will be treated as minor modifications to the Core Strategy, and they will be entirely at the Council’s discretion.

Q. Is it the case that these changes are a return to the UDP Inquiry system?
A. No - the Examination will consider matters related to legal compliance and soundness and will not respond to individual representations. Whilst the Council has to request any modifications, if these are needed in the Inspector’s view, and are not asked for by the Council, the implication is that the plan will be found unsound.

Q. A question was asked as to whether the guidance that is currently on the Planning Portal will be amended.
A. The Inspector replied that the Planning Inspectorate was in the process of updating and amending the information to ensure that it was accurate.
Role of the Programme Officer

- The Inspector explained that the Programme Officer’s role is very important, being the interface between the Inspector, interested parties and the London Borough of Hillingdon. He acts as a first point of contact for everyone involved in the Examination. If there are any requirements re documents or questions please contact the Programme Officer, who if unable to assist directly will seek the information.

Procedure re Hearings and Evidence

- The Hearing discussions will be led by the Inspector. He said that if further evidence is submitted it should focus upon the key matters in the Examination programme. Some of these are framed in a very general way to allow participants to concentrate on key matters of concern to them. This is a consistent approach adopted through all Core Strategy examinations.

- The Hearings will take the form of a round table discussion taking on board the representations that have been submitted. The Examination programme and the sessions themselves will be flexible. If there is a requirement to extend a session then there will be no cut off time. Similarly if some sessions conclude earlier then an opportunity to bring others forward will be taken. Obviously such decisions will take into account the requirements for representors to be available.

- The Inspector is prepared to hold evening sessions for the Examination and will be led by requests. Again the Programme Officer should be informed as soon as possible if evening sessions are preferred.

- Once the programme for the Examination is finalised the Programme Officer should be informed as soon as possible if an individual representor will have difficulty in attending a particular hearing session.

- The Hearings will adopt an inclusive approach; the Inspector promised to help all those who have a point to put across.

- From the Pre-Hearing Meeting discussion the Inspector considered it evident that the Hearings will need to extend into a second week. The Inspector will reflect upon the discussion and submitted representations and will provide a revised draft Examination Programme by the 20 January 2012.

- The Inspector stressed that there is no need to produce any further evidence, but if representors wish to expand on their initial submissions then no further statements should exceed 3000 words.

- The Inspector welcomes Statements of Common Ground being submitted prior to the Hearings.
• The Inspector is going to undertake a general tour of the London Borough of Hillingdon visiting sites detailed in the Core Strategy. If specific sites become the focus of attention during the Hearings then the Inspector will visit these following the conclusion of the Hearing. He asked that representors who wanted him to visit particular sites inform the Programme Officer as soon as possible.

**Timeframe**

• Following the conclusion of the Hearings the Inspector will complete his report as quickly as possible, given the possible need to advertise any main modifications.

**Questions / Statements**
The following are summaries of questions made at the Pre-Hearing Meeting together with the Inspector’s response.

**Q:** If the report was completed in 2-3 months would the report then become public?
**A:** Yes, at the London Borough of Hillingdon’s discretion.

**Q:** What weight should representors give to the National Planning Policy Framework?
**A:** Its significance increases as it nears adoption, after which it will be a significant material consideration.

**Q:** Some topics may require another individual to provide expert witness is this acceptable?
**A:** Yes, you will be able to have as many as you require.

**Q:** I have made representations regarding both employment and retail matters and would wish to attend more than one of the hearing sessions.
**A:** Anyone can attend more than one Examination session. Contact Mark Stevens, the Programme Officer and make him aware.

**Q:** Which Key Matter will the policy for Heathrow be discussed under?
**A:** Key Matter 7. (NB it is now under 2)

**Q:** Where is the policy towards the Grand Union Canal considered?
**A:** Under Key Matters 6 and 7, there may be some crossover. (NB it is now under 6)

**Q:** Where are town centres considered?
**A:** Can be included under Key Matter 6. (NB it is now included under 9)

**Q:** Under Key Matter 8 when will Infrastructure be considered for discussion?
**A:** I am flexible on this; if there is enough interest we can include a session. (NB a session is now included)
Q: A lot of representations have been made in respect of the Green Belt, when will they be considered?
A: Right at the beginning (NB it is now under 2). The purpose of the Hearings is not to respond to objections, but rather to focus upon key issues that affect soundness. The Hearings cannot be a public forum for individual representations.

Q: Where is environmental sustainability covered?
A: Under Key Matter 7 (NB it is now included under 5)

Q: Companies and individuals have issues in respect of the Heathrow Opportunity Area, where will it be discussed?
A: Key Matter 2.

Q: Implementation, deliverability and local infrastructure have been raised by a large number of parties in respect of sustainability. Where will these be covered?
A: They will be considered throughout the examination, but can be included specifically under Key Matter 7.

Q: Following the recent announcement, where is HS2 included?
A: Under Key Matter 7 (NB it is now under 6).

Q: The Inspector said he will give notice in mid-February of issues requiring further information; given that, the deadline of 24 February 2012 for any further written submissions is a tight deadline. Can this be amended?
A: I would like all parties to keep to this deadline, however there is some flexibility if issues come to light that need an additional response after that date. The aim is to be inclusive and ensure all parties are satisfied with the process whilst also ensuring an efficient process.

Q: In the guidance notes it says that no document is meant to be confidential.
A: Although documents pertaining to the Core Strategy are available in the public domain, certain details have to remain confidential to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act.