

Eden Local Plan Examination

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VIA EMAIL & POST: Tony.Blackburn@eden.gov.uk

23955/A3/DM/jc

8 November 2016

Dear Tony,

RE: EDEN LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

We write on behalf of our client, Story Homes. We have very recently been made aware that the Council faces a significant problem in the resourcing of the work required in respect of the emerging Local Plan and that this is highly likely to cause further disruption to the Examination process. We note that both Officers who have been involved in the Plan preparation and evidence base are leaving the Council imminently, with no replacements in situ. The Council therefore has no policy team to progress the Local Plan.

In addition to completing the outstanding debate regarding objectively assessed housing needs (our Client's response to the Position Statement will be issued prior to the deadline of 17 November 2016), we understand that the Council is also tasked with undertaking the following:

- Review and update the selection of Key Hubs and methodology;
- Review sites within Key Hubs and identify new sites, updating the evidence base accordingly;
- Public consultation on new sites;
- Review the site selection process and site choice around Penrith; and
- Prepare and consult upon Main Modifications.

During the previous hearing sessions, the Council was tasked with setting out a timetable for completion of the above. We had generally understood that this work was to be completed before the end of November 2016. Given the lack of resources and the position the Council now finds itself in, the completion of this work in such a timeframe appears unachievable.

Whilst our Client is keen to ensure the Local Plan progresses, this unforeseen position raises several important questions regarding continuity. Any new resources or external consultant appointments by the Council will take time get up to speed, plus there is a need to allow adequate time to complete the work as set out above. We note that the Council has issued a brief to seek to appoint an external consultant and we note that such arrangements are unlikely to enable any meaningful progress until the end of November at the earliest.



Regulation 28(2)
Section 22(2)

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Our Client is therefore concerned that unless sufficient time is provided, the necessary work in the Local Plan is likely to be rushed or fail to address all points that relate to the soundness of the emerging Plan.

In this regard, our Client suggests that the only pragmatic way forward is for a formal suspension of the Examination process to allow the Council sufficient time to resource the process and to prepare the new evidence, or, for a very clear timetable to be set out now which allows sufficient time for the outstanding evidence to be collected, production of main modifications, and undertake the required public consultation to enable the completion of the Plan.

Our Client realises that this is a matter for the Council and Inspector to consider, but paragraph 9.13–9.17 of the Inspector's Procedural Practice Guidance considers that such measures may be appropriate to ensure that the Examination process is effective. Unfortunately, we are in a position where there is a substantial amount of new evidence based work that is yet to be completed, without any resources available and without any clear timetable as to when it can be achieved.

We trust that you recognise our Client's concerns accordingly and welcome your response to this matter.

Yours sincerely



DAN MITCHELL
Partner

cc: Daniel Barton, Story Homes