

WYRE LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL REVIEW (2011-2031) EXAMINATION

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR THOSE PARTICIPATING IN THE EXAMINATION

Introduction

1. I am Mark Dakeyne, Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to independently examine the soundness of the Wyre Local Plan Partial Review (2011-2031) (the Local Plan or Plan).
2. The Programme Officer (PO) for the examination is Tony Blackburn. His contact details are given below.

Purpose of the Guidance Note

3. This note provides guidance on procedural and administrative matters for participants involved in the Examination into the Local Plan.
4. All participants should familiarise themselves with the contents of the note, in particular those who wish to submit hearing statements and take part in the hearing sessions.

The role of the Inspector and PO in the Examination

5. My task is to consider the soundness of the plan. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the criteria for determining soundness - namely that the plan is **positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy**. Appendix A to this Guidance Note contains a list of useful publications and websites for advice.
6. The starting point is that the Council has submitted what it considers to be a sound plan. I aim to work collaboratively with the Council and the Examination participants in a proactive and pragmatic manner. However, this does not necessarily mean that the Plan will be found to be sound.
7. Following the close of the hearings I shall prepare a report to the Council with my conclusions. The Council has been invited to formally request that I recommend any Main Modifications which are necessary to make the plan sound, if it is feasible that such modifications could make it sound. I will deal with broad issues in my report, and not with each individual representation.
8. Any Main Modifications are likely to need to be the subject of formal consultation and potentially considered as part of a revised Sustainability Appraisal. Should this be necessary more information will be provided at that stage.

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9. The PO works independently of the Council under my direction in connection with the Examination. Tony can be contacted as follows:
Email: tony.blackburn@wyre.gov.uk
Telephone: 01254 260286
Address: 15 Ottawa Close, Blackburn BB2 7EB
10. The main tasks of the PO are to act as a channel of communication between all parties and me; to liaise with the parties to ensure the smooth running of the Examination; to ensure that all documents received are recorded and distributed; and to keep the Examination Library up to date. Copies of the Examination documents are on the Council's webpage (see below). Any participant who does not have access to the internet should contact Tony so that alternative arrangements can be discussed.
11. Any procedural questions or other matters that you wish to raise with me prior to the hearing sessions should be made through Tony. Please let him know if you have any specific needs in relation to participation at the hearing sessions.

Progressing your representations on the plan

12. At the time of making their representation many representors indicated whether their views should be dealt with in a written form or whether they feel that they need to discuss them orally at a hearing session. Both methods will carry the same weight and I shall have equal regard to views put at a hearing or in writing. Participation at a hearing session will only be useful and helpful to me if you wish and need to take part in a debate and are seeking a specific change to the plan.
13. A Schedule of Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) for the Examination and on which the soundness of the plan depends will be prepared. For each Issue there will be specific questions. These questions will form the basis of the discussion at the hearing sessions and should also be the basis on which any written hearing statements, to be submitted in advance of the hearings, are prepared. The hearings are open to all to observe, but only those who have previously made representations relevant to the matters being considered, and have indicated that they want to participate, will be allowed to speak.

Dates for Hearing Sessions

14. It is intended that the hearing sessions (which are part of the overall Examination) will open on **Tuesday 27 September 2022**, the sessions taking place between 27 and 29 September 2022.

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15. The hearing sessions are likely to be conducted primarily as a face-to-face event. However, there may be the opportunity for participants to join by video link, if necessary. The face to face element of the hearings will take place at the **Civic Centre, Breck Road, Poulton-le-Fylde, FY6 7PU**.
16. The programme indicating the matters to be discussed at each hearing session will be based on the Schedule of MIQs. A provisional programme linked to the likely Matters and Issues is attached as Appendix B. Friday 30 September will be kept as a reserve session which will be used should discussion on an issue having not been completed or for dealing with additional evidence that I have asked the Council to prepare to support of the soundness of the Plan. Representors should keep the reserve day free, albeit it is unlikely that they will be required.

The hearing sessions and hearing statements

17. Each matter will be the subject of separate discussion, although the discussion on some Matters may take place over more than one hearing session and at other sessions several Matters may be discussed consecutively. The hearings will take the form of a roundtable discussion which I shall lead. They will not involve the formal presentation of cases by participants or cross-examination. I shall take account of all written representations already submitted and it is not the purpose of the hearings for these to be repeated. The Schedule of MIQs will be prepared by 24 June 2022 and will form the basis of the agenda for each session. **Preparation of statements should not commence until this stage when participants at each hearing will also be confirmed.**
18. The hearings will be inquisitorial, rather than adversarial. I shall endeavour to progress them in an effective and efficient manner. As part of that process, it is my aim to minimise the amount of material necessary to come to informed conclusions on the issues of soundness. In that way I will conduct a focussed series of hearings and, in turn, produce a short, focussed report.
19. The Council is required to produce a hearing statement for each of the Matters in which it should seek to answer each of the individual questions set out in the list of MIQs. Other representors may also submit hearing statements on the MIQs of relevance to their original representation, although it is not a requirement.
20. Hearing statements should be a maximum of 3000 words for each Matter but I anticipate that most will not need to be as long as this. The word limit does not include Appendices but these should only be included where directly

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relevant and necessary and should also be as succinct as possible.

21. In preparing statements you should only answer the specific questions of relevance to your original representation whilst clearly identifying the number(s) of the question(s) you are seeking to answer. In addition to answering the relevant question(s), where a representor is seeking a specific change to the plan in order to make it sound, it would be helpful for suggested wording for the change to be set out in the hearing statement. However, this is only likely to be possible/appropriate for representors seeking a limited and focussed change to the plan. In answering the questions, and insofar as it is relevant, participants may particularly wish to refer to the documents which the Council has submitted to the Examination.
22. An electronic version only of each hearing statement should be submitted unless the PO subsequently contacts you requesting paper copies. The statements should be sent to be received by the PO **by 17:00 on Friday 9 September 2022**. Unless there are exceptional circumstances it is unlikely that late submissions will be accepted. Apart from these hearing statements no other written evidence will be accepted unless I specifically request it. Hearing statements will be posted on the Examination webpage, so that they are available to all participants and anyone else who wishes to read them. Because they will be available in this way, they will not be circulated directly to participants. However, anyone who is unable to access them on the webpage may request copies from the PO.

The hearing programme

23. A draft programme for the hearings will be circulated by the 24 June 2022. Detailed agendas may be circulated a few days in advance of each hearing. It will also be possible to check the programme, agendas, and progress of the hearings on the web site or by contacting the PO, once details are published.
24. On most hearing days there will be morning and afternoon hearings with sessions starting at 09.30 and 13.30 hours. There will be comfort breaks mid-morning and mid-afternoon and a lunch break of around 1 hour.

The Examination Website

25. The Examination Library is accessible from the Examination web site:
<https://www.wyre.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-plan-partial-review-2011-2031-1/6>
26. This contains links to the Council's evidence base comprising Submission and Evidence Documents, and documents produced during the Examination,

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including the MIQs. If you have difficulties accessing the Library please contact the PO. It is not necessary to attach extracts of documents from the evidence base to hearing statements as they are already Examination documents.

Site visits

27. Insofar as I consider it necessary to my assessment of the soundness of the plan I shall visit sites and areas referred to in the representations during the examination. I will do these on an unaccompanied basis unless I find that I need to go onto private land.

And finally,.....

28. I emphasise:

- I shall have equal regard to views put orally or in writing;
- the need for succinctness - please respect the letter and spirit of the 3,000-word limit in hearing statements with only limited and directly relevant appendices;
- that you must meet the deadlines for the submission of hearing statement(s);
- that your hearing statement(s) should focus on answering the questions I will pose in the *Schedule of Matters, Issues and Questions*.

Mark Dakeyne
INSPECTOR
20 May 2022

Attached – Appendices A and B

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Appendix A

List of relevant guidance and evidence

A. Government Policy and Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Planning Practice Guidance

B. Guidance from the Planning Inspectorate

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/examining-local-plans-procedural-practice>

Procedural Practice in the Examination of Local Plans: The Planning Inspectorate
Updated 14 February 2022 (7th Edition revised for accessibility)

C. Examination and Evidence Base Documents

The Examination web site can be found at:

<https://www.wyre.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-plan-partial-review-2011-2031-1/6>

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Appendix B

Provisional Hearings Programme

Tuesday 27 September 2022

Introduction

Matter 1 - Legal Compliance, Procedural Requirements, and the Duty to Cooperate

Matter 2 - Housing Need and Requirement

Wednesday 28 September 2022

Matter 2 continued (as necessary) - Housing Need and Requirement

Matter 3 – Affordable Housing

Thursday 29 September 2022

Matter 4 – Town Centres

Matter 5 – Other policies

Review and close of the hearings

Friday 30 September 2022

Reserve day