

Email Statement Dr M. Doggett Multiple Matters Rep Id: SLP278 (A)

Dear Miss Trueman

Thank you for your email of 20th July with regard to the Appointment of Mr Tom Bristow as Inspector for the North Warwickshire Borough Council local plan and representation at the hearings that are to be held from September 25th onwards.

I am writing to confirm that I do wish to attend the phase 1 hearings.

The matters that I wish to be heard on include:

1. The sustainability and deliverability and therefore the soundness and justification of the local plan, particularly:
2. *Matter 7 (Insp 5 Para 7.1,2, & 3) and (Matter 8.1,5, 6 & 7)* From the documentation and consultation process it appears clear that plan has aspirations (that is hope – Insp 2 para37) for adequate infrastructure but it appears that the finance, whether by section 106 or CIL money or the councils resources, will not be there in anything like an adequate amount to deliver a proper sustainable development. I believe that the council has previously observed (on planning obligations for open space, sport and recreation): “improvements to infrastructure will be fundamental to achieving our ambitions for shaping the Borough to 2031. This infrastructure will include facilities needed for development to function and to ensure the integration and creation of sustainable communities”. It appears that there is likely to be a very significant shortfall between contributions from developers and what is required to make the plan sound and effective, and there appears to be no clarity or certainty about where all the necessary money will come from in the current financial climate, and therefore whether the required infrastructure will actually be delivered or be deliverable. Indeed it appears that it is very unlikely that financial resources will be available to deliver all the proper required infrastructure.
3. *Matter 7 (Para 7.1,2, & 3)* I believe that Government guidance also states that ‘the local plan should also be realistic about what can be achieved, and when, (including in relation to infrastructure). This means paying careful attention to ...,... identifying what infrastructure is required and how it can be funded and brought on stream at the appropriate time; and ensuring that the requirements of the plan as a whole will not prejudice the viability of the development’. ‘The local plan should make clear, for at least the first five years, what infrastructure is required, who is going to fund and provide it, and how it relates to the anticipated rate and phasing of development.’ Again it appears that it is very unlikely that funding and financial resources will be available to deliver all the required infrastructure
4. *Matter 7 (Insp5 Para 7.1 &2)* The road network, especially the A5, does not appear to be fit to carry the great increase in traffic arising from the much increased size of the development without very significant improvement and it seems unlikely that sufficient resources/finance will be available to properly improve this.
5. *Matter 3 (!Insp5 Para 3.4a &b)* It appears likely that most of the developer raised money will be used on road improvement, for example the road from the B5000/ Polesworth to the A5 and so little will be left for infrastructure or for a good percentage of affordable housing in the local plan development.
6. *Matter 3 (Insp 5 Para3.4a &b)* It appears likely therefore that the percentage of affordable housing may be negotiated down by the developers. The availability of other types of housing to suit the needs of all members of the community may also be affected.
7. *Matter 3 (Insp5)* Noting the initial development already undertaken at the Polesworth end I have concern that road and parking spaces may not be adequate for the level of vehicle ownership and usage; possibly in order to get more houses on the site?

8. *Matter 4 (Insp5 Para 4.7,8 & 9)* The size of the development and number of houses planned around Dordon and Polesworth is excessive in relation to the size of the settlements and will hugely alter the nature of the communities. Neither village has the town centre facilities/ infrastructure to support such a huge expansion. Therefore significant infrastructure development, provision and resource/finance for this would be crucial to the plan being sustainable. In the local plan there are aspirations (hope) but there appears to be little evidence that there will be adequate funding to achieve this.

9. *Matter 4 (Insp5 Para 4.7 b & c) The Settlement Hierarchy.* Dordon and Polesworth are separate communities with separate characters. Their designation as one “Market town” may suit planners etc., but it does not properly represent the reality on the ground or in the communities or in the infrastructure. The composite “market town” does not have a town centre. Development of a large estate around them without heavy investment in new infrastructure is not sustainable.

10. *Matter 4 (Insp5 Para 4.9)* On the other hand small/moderate development spread over of a number of villages in North Warwickshire (including Dordon and Polesworth) could possibly enhance village communities and support thriving local communities, for example strengthening the viability of village schools and local facilities such as shops in these communities. The settlement hierarchy in the local plan with regard to the size of development proposed in Polesworth and Dordon is not appropriate for a sustainable deliverable plan of the proposed size with known available resources.

11. *Matter 4 (Insp5 Para 4.8)* There is a risk that with the local plan as it stands, there will end up being a large housing estate beside the villages of Dordon and Polesworth with little and/or poor infrastructure, congested roads, perhaps possible community / social problems etc., rather than a healthily enlarged community, or multiple smaller enlarged communities in this area of North Warwickshire.

12. *Matter 2 (Insp5 para2)* I believe that Paragraph 155 of government guidance indicates that ‘early and meaningful engagement in collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that local plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area including those contained in any neighbourhood plans that may have been made’.

In my opinion this draft local plan does not reflect the 'collective vision' of a large number of people in Dordon and Polesworth. This raises the question as to whether the consultation process has been as fully a meaningful engagement in collaboration with the local neighbourhood as it could have been. The local plan does not appear to have strongly taken on board, and acted on, the views of a large number of local people expressed to the council in terms of collaboration and making significant real practical changes to the proposed local development plans for Dordon and Polesworth.

Dr Mark Doggett