

EXAMINATION OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER MINERALS DPD GUIDANCE NOTE FROM THE INSPECTOR

1. The Examination Hearings into the Greater Manchester Minerals DPD will open at 10:00 hrs on Wednesday 22 February 2012 at The Town Hall, Stockport. This Guidance Note is being sent to all those who have made representations, and its purpose is to provide an opportunity for procedural and administrative matters relating to the Examination to be explained.

2. **My Role**

I am a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to independently examine the soundness of the plan. Following the close of the Hearings I shall prepare a short report for the Joint Councils with recommendations. Details of the Examination process are contained in The Planning Inspectorate's booklets "*Local Development Frameworks – Examining Development Plan Documents: Procedure Guidance*" (2009) and "*Local Development Frameworks – Examining Development Plan Documents: Soundness Guidance*" (2009). All involved in the Examination process should read these documents.

3. **The Programme Officer**

Chris Hobson is the Programme Officer for the Examination ("the PO") and his contact details are on the accompanying letter. He is acting as an impartial officer of the Examination, under my guidance. His main tasks are to liaise with all parties to ensure the smooth running of the Examination, to organise the Hearings Programme, and to ensure that all documents received both before and during the Hearings are recorded and distributed. Copies of all the Examination documents, including the representation forms and further written submissions, will be available in the Examination Library. Procedural questions should be raised with Chris in the first instance.

4. **The Examination of Soundness**

The Examination is a significant departure from previous Inquiries into objections to Local Plans. These are the key points to bear in mind:

- The starting point is that the Joint Councils have submitted what they consider is a sound plan. The focus is on testing soundness and not on responding to objections raised in the representations. Accordingly, I shall define a number of matters and issues for discussion that will test the plan's justification, effectiveness and compliance with National guidance;
- All those who have submitted representations are entitled to attend and speak at the Hearings. Those who are not attending do not need to submit further written evidence. If they feel further evidence is essential, then they must follow the guidance on content and format given below. Attendance at a Hearing session will only be useful and helpful to me if you wish to participate in a debate. Those seeking changes should demonstrate why the plan is unsound;
- The Hearings are not planning appeal inquiries and will not be at all confrontational.

5. **The Hearing sessions** will be led by me, and will take the form of focused discussions to help me arrive at my conclusions. I need to concentrate on the most important matters that go to the heart of the soundness of the plan. It may be that

some less important matters can be addressed by further written statements, and I shall refine the programme for the Hearings accordingly. Those speaking at the sessions may bring with them professional experts, although it will not usually be necessary to formally present evidence. I shall outline the matters and issues for discussion, and then invite individuals to make their contribution.

6. **The Hearings Programme**

The matters to be examined at the Hearings, key issues and some further questions are attached, together with the draft programme which identifies when those who have made representations and indicated a wish to speak will be heard.

7. **Submission of Evidence - Content, Format and Timing**

I expect that the evidence base to support the plan has been produced with a great deal of involvement by all stakeholders. Therefore, I want to keep the submission of further written evidence to the absolute minimum. Accordingly, these are the key points to remember:

- **Core Documents** are available in the Examination Library, and therefore you do not need to quote extensively from those documents but simply give me a reference to note;

- **Agreed Statements of Common Ground** between the Joint Councils and those seeking changes are helpful, and should be prepared as soon as possible;

- **Statements for a Hearing session** should be sent to the PO by **Wednesday 8 February**. No statement should be longer than 3,000 words per matter for discussion. Any statements longer than this will be returned for editing. In addition to the paper copies specified below, please send, where possible, e-mailed electronic versions (in Word or pdf format) of all statements and appendices to the PO, so that they can be included on the Examinations website.

- **Statement Format** should be A4, printed on both sides, **with no spiral bindings**. No statement/piece of paper submitted in advance of, or at, the Hearings will be accepted if it fails to be clearly referenced at the top, right hand corner, with the relevant respondent reference and appropriate matter number, e.g. Respondent 777's statement on Matter 4 should be referenced Matter 4/777; the Councils' response for the same Matter should be referenced GM/Matter 4. Any photographs should be submitted in A4 format and be annotated on the back with the appropriate reference. Those appearing at Hearings should send sufficient copies of all statements to the PO for issuing to each participant, plus three (for the Inspector, the Councils and the Library), e.g. if 10 people are listed for a hearing, then the PO will require 13 copies (to include one unstapled, for further copying). For **written representations**, only five copies of statements (again, just stapled, **not spiral bound**) need be submitted.

8. **Site Visits**

I shall visit sites referred to, unaccompanied by the parties wherever possible. Once the Hearings are over I can receive no further evidence from any party unless it is something I have asked for.

Andrew Mead
Inspector
5 January 2012