

Examination of the Copeland Local Plan 2021-2038

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Inspector's Initial Questions for the Council

Introduction

- 1 I have been appointed by the Secretary of State to conduct the Examination of the Copeland Local Plan (Local Plan). I have commenced my preparation and have a number of initial questions which are set out below. The response to these matters will help to inform me how the Examination should proceed and to better focus my Matters, Issues and Questions. As my preparation develops, I may have further initial questions of this nature.

Submission Plan

- 2 The Council has submitted for examination the Publication Draft Local Plan (January 2022) together with the Addendum (July 2022). As the Addendum has been prepared and consulted on before submission, I confirm that the Local Plan which is being examined incorporates the Addendum.

Modifications

- 3 The Core Documents submitted alongside the Local Plan include Suggested Main Modifications to the Plan (CD14); Suggested Minor Modifications to the Plan (CD15); Suggested Main Modifications to the Appendices (CD16) and Suggested Minor Modifications to the Appendices (CD17). These do not appear to have been subject to consultation.
- 4 The starting point for the Examination is that the Council have submitted a Plan which they consider to be sound, legally compliant and ready for examination. Nevertheless, I will also consider any changes that have subsequently been suggested by the Council, along with those changes put forward by other parties seeking to amend the Plan. Under the provisions of section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the Council will need to ask me to recommend any Main Modifications that are considered necessary to make the Plan sound/legally compliant.
- 5 However, I can only recommend Main Modifications if they are necessary to resolve problems that would otherwise make the submitted Plan unsound or not legally compliant. Main Modifications are changes which, either alone or in combination with others, would materially alter the Plan or its policies. Any potential Main Modifications must be subject to consultation and in some cases further sustainability appraisal and habitat regulations assessments might also

be required.

- 6 The proposed Main Modifications may be discussed, where appropriate at the hearing sessions. It is possible that further Main Modifications may also be proposed and discussed during the hearings.
- 7 The suggested Additional Modifications are those changes which do not materially affect the policies in the Plan. Please note that the Council is accountable for any such changes and they do not fall within the scope of the examination.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 8 Can the Council clarify the current progress with neighbourhood plans in the Borough?

Playing Pitch Strategy

- 9 What progress has been made with the Playing Pitch Strategy? When is it anticipated that it will be finalised?

Next steps

- 10 It would be appreciated if you could provide me with a response to the questions by **18 November 2022**. If additional time is required for more involved matters, please let me know and a timetable can be agreed.
- 11 I will circulate a draft Matters, Issues and Questions paper in due course and a draft Hearing Programme and Guidance Notes once more details are known. **Please note that the Council will need to give at least 6 weeks' notice before the start of the first hearing.**
- 12 As discussed via the Programme Officer, it is anticipated that hearing sessions will commence on Tuesday 31 January 2023. Please can the Council confirm the availability of a suitable venue for the hearing sessions.
- 13 If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me via the programme officer.

Caroline Mulloy

Inspector

8 November 2022