

Agenda 1 – Procedural Matters Additional Statement

North Somerset Core
Strategy; Examination of
Remitted Policies. Turley
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(Severn Valley) Ltd

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1 Agenda 1- Procedural Matters

Background to the Examination

- 1.1 The factual background and issues for the examination are adequately set out in the Inspectors letters (RED/01 and RED/03) and the Council's Statement for Consultation (RED/04). We have also commented in the introduction to our response to RED/04 dated the 17th of January 2014. In addition to that it is of some concern that the Council in paragraph 86 of RED/04 do not accept the conclusions of the High Court judge which may have coloured their approach to this re-examination.

Scope of the Examination

- 1.2 Our view is that the scope of the examination is clearly set out in RED/01 and RED/03, which in the first instance only Policy CS13 will be re-examined with any consequential effects on Policy CS14, CS19, CS28 and CS30-33 being examined at a later date, should this be necessary. It is right that the overall numbers should be established first before examining how they could be accommodated in the spatial policies subsequently. It is entirely wrong as the Council have done so, to pre-judge the outcome of this re-examination and the Inspector's conclusions and assume that their own figures will be accepted and can be accommodated within the spatial policies without the need for any further re-examination.

Councils Proposed Modifications

- 1.3 On the basis that this part of the re-examination is solely to consider policy CS13, the council's Proposed Modifications to Policy CS14, CS19, CS28 and CS30-33 should be disregarded. They are put forward under entirely false assumptions by the council that:
1. their proposed amendment to Policy CS13 is sound;
 2. that it is a practical solution to enable the adoption of the Core Strategy in advance of the review of the West of England SHMA;
 3. that the house building industry could not deliver higher numbers and have thus discounted their own evidence base of objectively assessed need as set out in the Edge Analytics Report.
 4. That setting overall housing numbers at this level would mean the other remitted Policies would not need to be re-examined.
- 1.4 On the contrary, the NPPF requires the council to identify their full objectively assessed housing needs for market and affordable housing in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Impact of the Proposed Modifications on the Scope of the Examination

- 1.5 The proposed modifications should not be permitted to affect the scope of the examination. It is important that Policy CS13 and the overall housing numbers are properly examined first. Even if it were appropriate, there is no scope within the examination time table to provide sufficient time for the thorough examination of the other Policies that would be required.

Impact of the Proposed Modifications on the Overall Spatial Strategy

- 1.6 The proposed modifications to the overall housing numbers will inevitably impact on the spatial strategies. Whatever the scale of the increased requirement the spatial strategy and specific spatial Policies need to be re-examined to consider the scope for further sustainable development. The spatial strategy has to be re-examined to ensure that development takes place in the most sustainable locations.
- 1.7 In Paragraph 96 of RED/04 the Council justify its approach because of their view that the level of housing proposed could be delivered in accordance with the existing spatial strategy. Quite apart from the fact that the assumption should be properly tested by a thorough examination, the existing spatial strategy pre dates the publication of the final NPPF. It is therefore entirely appropriate that the existing spatial strategy should be re considered to assess whether it is still appropriate, whether it results in the most sustainable distribution and whether it is NPPF compliant.
- 1.8 In addition, the Council imply in Paragraph 96 of RED/04 that their proposed modifications would not change the existing spatial strategy. However that is not true either. In particular the modifications to Policy CS14 do change the distribution as set out in the following table:

Table 1

Comparison of allocations in adopted Core Strategy and proposed modifications

	Adopted Core Strategy	% Distribution	Modifications	% Distribution	Difference between adopted and mods	% Change
Weston Urban Area	3458	25 %	5136	30 %	+ 1678	+ 48.5%
Weston Villages	5500	39 %	5800	34 %	+ 300	+ 5.5%
Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead	3715	26 %	4180	25 %	+ 465	+ 12.5%
Service Villages	805	6 %	1168	7 %	+ 363	+ 45%
Other Settlements	522	4 %	846	5 %	+ 324	+ 62%
Totals	14000		17130		3130	+ 22%

- 1.9 The above analysis demonstrates that the Councils proposed modifications to the other spatial policies need to also be fully re-examined subsequently to ensure that the most sustainable distribution options are identified. This will also require a consequential need to review sustainable development options within the Green Belt. However, it is not appropriate to consider these here and if necessary we would wish to respond to any additional material the Council submits on the spatial policies through the examination.

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