

Wiltshire Local Plan - Examination

Inspectors' Matters, Issues and Questions for Focussed Hearing Sessions

Notes

- 1) Prior to the forthcoming hearing sessions, responses are invited from participants on the following Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) raised by the Inspectors. The MIQs do not intend to cover every policy criterion in the Wiltshire Local Plan (the Plan) nor all potential legal compliance and soundness considerations at this stage. Instead, they are specific to the focussed hearing sessions relating to the Duty to Co-operate (DtC) as identified by the Inspectors, taking account of the views of the Council and other representations.
- 2) The Council has provided an initial response that is relevant to some of the questions in this document in its letter dated 21 March 2025 (the letter) with supplementary documents published in the Examination Library in April and May 2025. In producing their statement, there is no need for the Council to repeat the information in the letter and accompanying documents. However, the Council is free to refer to (and/or supplement) this previously submitted information in its response. Where necessary, related questions have remained in this document in order to allow other representors to comment and to facilitate discussion at the hearings.
- 3) In responding to the questions in this document, where reference is to be made to background documents, topic papers and position statements produced by the Council or Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) these should be clearly cross-referenced by providing the document reference, page and paragraph numbers. The Council should also identify and address specific concerns raised in representations.
- 4) This document may be supplemented with further questions from the Inspectors as the Examination progresses – including during discussions at the hearing sessions.
- 5) Further information about the Examination, hearings and the format of written statements is provided in the accompanying Guidance Note, and the Planning Inspectorate's Procedural Guide which should be read alongside the MIQs. For certainty, the deadline for written statements is **5pm on Tuesday 3 June 2025** and they should be no more than 3,000 words long. However, within reason, a flexible approach may be taken to the length of the Council statement as it is required to cover a large number of individual questions and relevant representations.
- 6) Other than the written statements referred to above, no further information or documentation should be submitted to the Examination unless specifically requested. Any unsolicited items sent in, will be returned to the sender.

Matter 1 - Duty to Co-operate (DtC)

Issue

Whether the DtC has been satisfied, insofar as the requirement for the Council to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with statutory DtC bodies on strategic matters of relevance prior to the submission of the Plan.

Questions:

1. Is there sufficient evidence that the Council has met the DtC for relevant strategic matters, including the provision of housing, employment and infrastructure, with the following neighbouring authorities:
 - a) Bath and North-East Somerset Council;
 - b) Cotswold District Council;
 - c) Dorset Council;
 - d) Gloucestershire County Council;
 - e) Hampshire County Council;
 - f) Oxfordshire County Council;
 - g) New Forest District Council;
 - h) New Forest National Park Authority;
 - i) Test Valley Borough Council;
 - j) Somerset Council;
 - k) South Gloucestershire Council;
 - l) Swindon Borough Council;
 - m) Vale of White Horse Council, and;
 - n) West Berkshire Council.

2. Are there any inter-relationships with other local authorities in terms of housing markets, economic activity, travel to work areas, the market for employment land and premises and/or provision of infrastructure, which have not been specifically addressed during the preparation of the Plan as part of the DtC?

3. Is there sufficient evidence that the Council has met the DtC for relevant strategic matters (including the provision of housing, employment, infrastructure and the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment as appropriate), where necessary with the following DtC bodies:
 - a) the Civil Aviation Authority;
 - b) the Environment Agency;
 - c) Historic England;
 - d) Homes England;
 - e) National Highways;
 - f) Natural England;
 - g) Network Rail;
 - h) NHS England;
 - i) the Office of Rail and Road;
 - j) Wiltshire Integrated Care Board;
 - k) Wiltshire Local Economic Partnership, and;
 - l) Wiltshire and Swindon Local Nature Partnership.

4. Are there any other relevant strategic matters in relation to the DtC?
5. If so, how have they been addressed through co-operation and what is the outcome of this? How have these informed the Plan's policies?
6. Are there any strategic cross-boundary issues in relation to any of the proposed site allocations and any general policies in the Plan, and if so, how have they been considered via the DtC?
7. Are there any outstanding concerns from adjoining authorities or other DtC bodies regarding the DtC?

N.B. The Council, if they have not done so already, should liaise with neighbouring authorities and other DtC bodies to produce and/or update (as necessary) a SoCG in advance of the hearing sessions to ensure that they are consistent with the DtC evidence upon which it seeks to rely.

Philip Mileham
INSPECTOR

Gareth Wildgoose
INSPECTOR

9 May 2025