GUIDANCE NOTE FROM THE INSPECTOR

Introduction

1. The Hearing sessions which are part of the overall Examination into the Local Plan Review (the Plan) Plan will open on **Tuesday 19 June 2018** at 10:00 hrs; they are likely to last for two weeks. The venue for the Hearings is Room WG06 of London Borough of Newham’s Dockside Offices, 1000 Dockside Road, London E16 2QU.

The Inspector’s role

2. The Inspector’s role is to consider whether the Local Plan meets the requirements of the Act and associated Regulations against the **tests of legal compliance, duty to co-operate and soundness**. The Examination is likely to focus on the tests of soundness as set out in paragraph 182 of the National Planning Policy Framework (**the Framework**), which was published on 27 March 2012. The relevant soundness criteria are whether the Local Plan is:

   1) **positively prepared** (based on a strategy that seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development);

   2) **justified** (the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence);

   3) **effective** (deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities); and

   4) **consistent with national policy** (enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework). Appendix A contains a list of useful publications and web sites for advice.

3. Examining plans under the current system is based on the following key considerations:

   - First, the **focus is on the Plan** rather than the objections. My role is to examine the soundness of the Plan having regard to the representations submitted and issues identified, rather than considering individual objections as such.

   - The Hearings are akin to an **Examination in Public** with round table or informal Hearing sessions addressing particular topics, rather than a public inquiry which is more adversarial in nature.

4. Through the Programme Officer, I shall work with the Council and the Examination participants in a proactive, pragmatic and solution-orientated manner. Those taking part should aim to be cooperative and respectful. I cannot recommend as ‘main modifications’ changes that are merely "improvements" which do not affect the soundness of the Local Plan. Nevertheless, it would be unusual if the Council did not wish to respond positively to the concerns of participants, where possible, and I shall encourage that, if appropriate.

5. **The Council is likely to prepare schedules of main and additional modifications, to be available on the website, and ask that I deal with main modifications in the Report, which I will do, but only after everyone has had an opportunity to comment in writing on these modifications, if any are proposed.**

6. **If, exceptionally, more fundamental changes are proposed, the Council must fully explain and justify the reasons for the changes, with supporting evidence. It should also indicate the implications in terms of the soundness of the document and ensure that they have been subject to the same process of Sustainability Appraisal (SA), publicity and opportunity to make representations as with the submitted version.**
7. After the Hearing sessions I shall prepare a **Report to the Council**, with my conclusions and recommendations as to the action(s) it needs to take with regard to the soundness of the document. My report is not binding on the Council but it should amend the documents in the light of my recommendations and move swiftly to formal adoption. The report will deal with broad issues and not with each individual representation.

**The Programme Officer**

8. The Programme Officer (PO) for the Examination is Mr Ian Kemp. He is entirely independent of the Council for the purposes of this Examination, he has not been involved in the preparation of the Local Plan and he works under my direction. Mr Kemp can be contacted on 01527 861711 or 07723 009166, by email at idkemp@icloud.com, or by post at 16 Cross Furlong, Wychbold, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire, WR9 7TA.

9. The main tasks of the PO are to act as a channel of communication between myself and everyone involved; to liaise with all parties to ensure the smooth running of the Examination; to ensure that all documents received are recorded and distributed; and to keep the Examination Library. Copies of the Examination documents are mainly to be found on the Council’s web site (see below). A hard copy record will be held at the Council Offices prior to the Hearings and at the Hearing Session venue whilst they are in progress; anyone interested in viewing any of the documents in person should contact Mr Kemp beforehand in order to ensure availability.

10. During the Examination the PO will be able to tell you how closely the Hearing sessions are following the circulated programme. Alternatively, you will be able to view a regularly-updated programme on the web site at:

   https://www.newham.gov.uk/Pages/ServiceChild/Local-Plan-Submission-Examination.aspx

11. Any participant who has a disability that could affect their contribution to the Examination should contact the PO as soon as possible so that any necessary assistance can be provided. All other procedural questions or other matters that you wish to raise prior to the Hearings should be made through the PO.

**Number of representations**

12. A total of 505 comments were received at the submitted Local Plan stage from 44 respondents (persons or organisations). All the representations made during the consultation will be taken into account in the Examination insofar as they relate to my considerations of soundness.

**Progressing representations**

13. The starting point for the Examination is the assumption that the Council has submitted what it considers to be a sound Plan. **Those seeking changes should demonstrate why the Local Plan is unsound by reference to one or more of the soundness criteria set out in paragraph 2 above.**

14. The Council should rely on evidence collected whilst preparing the documents to demonstrate that the Local Plan is sound.

15. Those who have made representations on the Local Plan may have their views dealt with in a written form or come and discuss them orally at a Hearing session. Both methods will carry the same weight and I will have equal regard to views put orally or in writing. Representors should let the PO know by **Wednesday 6th June 2018** if they
wish to be heard at a particular Hearing session, **irrespective of any previous indications provided during the consultation.**

16. Attendance at a Hearing session will only be useful and helpful to me if you wish to participate in a debate. You will all be there to help me, so you may be asked to comment on things that are not directly related to your own written submissions.

17. I may also specifically invite participants to particular sessions if I think that would assist the Examination.

18. I stress the need for everyone to work together during the Examination process on changes that could be made to the Local Plan, whilst avoiding producing so many alterations that they together might render the Local Plan cumulatively unsound.

**The Hearing sessions**

19. Each matter will be the subject of a separate session. The format will provide a relaxed and informal setting for a discussion led by me. It is not necessary for those attending to be professionally represented but a professional expert may act for you if you so wish. However at Round Table sessions there will normally only be space at the table for one representative of each group or organisation (apart from the Council, who have two seats), though there is no objection to the representative changing, providing this is notified at the time.

20. Legal representatives take part as a member of the team, not in a traditional advocate’s role, as no cross-examination or opening/closing statements will normally be permitted.

21. I will draw those present into the discussion in such a way as to enable me to gain the information necessary to come to a firm conclusion on the matters before me. All statements should have been read beforehand by all participants and discussions will proceed on the assumption that they have been; there will therefore be no formal presentation of evidence. There may be an opportunity within the discussion to ask questions of the other participants, if appropriate. **No more evidence can be submitted once the Hearing session has closed unless I expressly request it. Any that is will almost certainly be returned by the PO.**

23. The Hearings will be inquisitorial rather than adversarial. I shall endeavour to progress them in an effective and efficient manner. As part of that process, it is my aim to minimise the amount of material necessary to come to informed conclusions on the issues of soundness. In that way I will conduct a short, focused series of Hearings and, in turn, produce a short, focused report.

**The Hearing Programme**

24. A draft Programme for the Hearings, putting dates and times to the Issues and Questions, is included on the Examination web site. If you have any queries, please raise them with the PO as soon as possible.

25. Should changes be required to the Programme, it will be updated on the Examination web site. The PO will also be able to provide information on any changes. However, it will be for individual participants to check on the progress of the Hearings, either on the web site or with the PO, and to ensure that they are present at the right time.

26. **After the first day (Tuesday 19 June), the Hearings sessions will start at 09:30 each day** and will normally finish no later than 17:00. No new Matter will begin before its stated start time but a later start may be unavoidable if a previous session on a Matter has overrun. A short break will be taken mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Lunch will be taken at around 13:00hrs.
The Evidence Base and Examination Library

28. The Council has prepared an evidence base list that will be available in the Examination Library (available to view on request from the PO). The evidence base includes documents to which the parties are likely to need to refer. Most of these will be available on the website, which will be regularly updated. Accordingly, parties should not attach extracts of these documents to their Statements as they are already Examination documents. However, where reference is made to an Examination Document the reference number should be given as should the section or paragraph where the point referred to can be found. This will allow other participants to see for themselves the context in which the point is made.

Statements of Common Ground

29. Statements of Common Ground (SCGs) are welcome where these would be helpful in identifying points not in dispute, thereby assisting the Hearings to concentrate on the key issues that truly need public discussion. They could for example include: agreed wording of a suggested change to a policy, agreed factual information or areas or points of disagreement.

30. **Work on such statements should commence now with the aim of completing them in time to influence relevant hearing Statements.**

Statements

31. All further representer statements, for both the Hearing and further written representations, must be sent to the PO by 17:00 hrs on **Wednesday 6th June 2018**. This deadline relates to the receipt of both paper copies and electronic copies. All further written submissions/statements should only address the Issues and Questions as set out in the Discussion Note. The Council’s Statements may also include responses to the matters in the original representations and should refer to any proposals for changes to the policies, text or plans (see also paragraphs 5 & 6 above). All statements will be placed on the Examination website as soon as possible.

Form of Statements

32. Appendix B of this document sets out the requirements for the presentation of all Statements. Its provisions should be thoroughly read and implemented. Statements that do not comply with these requirements will be returned. *Please note the 3,000 word limit.*

33. **Essentially, I need to know the following** from those submitting further statements:

- What particular part of the document is unsound?
- Which soundness test(s) does it fail?
- Why does it fail?
- How could the document be made sound?
- What is the precise change that is sought?

34. **From the Council I look for a brief response statement on each issue,** setting out why they consider the Local Plan to be sound in that respect.

Site visits

35. I will have **toured the area covered by the Local Plan** to familiarise myself and I will visit the main sites referred to in the representations before, during, and/or after the Hearing sessions. This will mostly be done unaccompanied but an accompanied visit may be needed for some sites after the Hearings.
Close of the Examination

36. Once I have gathered all the information necessary to come to reasoned conclusions on the main issues, I will write the Report. The Examination remains open until the Report is submitted to the Council; however, once the Hearing sessions are over I can receive no further information from any party, unless it is a matter on which I have specifically requested it. Any unsolicited items sent in will be returned to the sender.

Submission of the Reports to the Council

37. The report is currently expected to be submitted to the Council during the latter part of 2018. However this will be subject to review, depending on the progress of the Examination.
Appendix A - List of relevant legislation and guidance

Legislation

These documents can be searched for and found on: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012
The Localism Act 2011

Government Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)


Guidance from the Planning Inspectorate


Examination and Evidence Base Documents

The Examination web site can be found at:

https://www.newham.gov.uk/Pages/ServiceChild/Local-Plan-Submission-Examination.aspx

Many of the above documents and most of the evidence base documents are available on-line through the web site and can be found towards the end of the page.
Appendix B - Format for statements

A. Please send, where possible, e-mailed electronic versions of all Statements and Appendices to the PO (in Word or PDF format) for the Examination web site as well as three paper copies as detailed below.

B. I emphasise the need for succinct submissions with the avoidance of unnecessary detail and repetition of the original representation.

C. It is the quality of the reasoning that carries weight not the bulk of the documents. There is no need for verbatim quotations from the Local Plan or other sources of policy guidance. It is vital that the fundamental elements are set out clearly and succinctly – the hearing sessions are not the place for surprise contributions!

D. None of the statements should be longer than 3,000 words. For the avoidance of doubt, this limit applies to statements in response to individual questions. Statements should be prepared on A4 paper and not bound in any way but just stapled and hole punched. No photographs should be submitted. Any plans or diagrams should also be folded to A4 size and listed as Appendices.

E. Supporting material in the form of Appendices to statements should be limited to that which is essential and should not contain extracts from any publication that is already before the Examination, such as evidence base documents and nationally available Government guidance – a paragraph or page reference will suffice. Any Appendices should have a contents page and be paginated throughout. Whilst the word limit does not include text in appendices, the aim of succinctness should be respected. Anyone submitting appendices should indicate in their statement which parts they are especially relying upon.

F. Please submit a separate statement for each Matter covered. If your statement covers multiple issues, please do not combine the content into a single statement; each statement should specifically address questions covered within an individual issue. This will assist distribution, publication and understanding during the Hearing sessions.

G. All participants must adhere to the timetable for submitting statements. Late submissions and additional material will not be accepted under any circumstances, since this can cause disruption and result in unfairness. If material is not received by the deadlines, the PO will assume that you are relying on your original representation:

H. Statements to be received by the PO by 17:00 hrs on Wednesday 6th June 2018 (see paragraph 31 of the Notes).

I. It is stressed that these deadlines refer to the receipt of both electronic and paper copies of statements. It is not sufficient to send an electronic copy by this deadline to be followed by paper copies at a later time.

J. All paper copies of statements should be addressed to the Programme Officer at the following address:

Mr Ian Kemp
Programme Officer
16 Cross Furlong
Wychbold
Droitwich Spa
Worcestershire
WR9 7TA