

**INSPECTOR'S RESPONSE FOLLOWING COUNCILS' PROPOSAL TO  
SUSPEND THE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION**

Dear Ms Jordan,

***West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan***

Thank you for your response of 13<sup>th</sup> March to my concerns regarding the Joint Local Plan. I understand why you do not wish to withdraw the Plan and instead propose to undertake further work to address the issues I have identified.

You have outlined a timetable for undertaking an objective assessment of housing need and a review of the SHLAAs. You will assess the outcome of this work and how it may affect the Plan and undertake further consultation during mid to late summer. I also note your intention to allow time to undertake discussions as part of the duty-to-cooperate and to review the sustainability appraisal in light of changes which might arise.

I am satisfied this provides a basis for continuing with the examination process in the autumn. My only concern with your suggested timetable is that you allow adequate time for consultation if it is likely to take place during the main holiday period. I would not object if you took extra time so that the examination did not resume until late September or early October.

I therefore agree to a formal suspension of the examination process for approximately six months from the date of this letter. I will consider whether a pre-hearing meeting is necessary before hearings commence but my intention would be to make rapid progress once I am able to re-engage with the Plan.

As you do not intend to withdraw the Plan you should be aware that technically, I will examine it as originally submitted together with any changes you are recommending should be made to it. You will need to decide on which elements of the Local Plan to consult on. It may be better, for instance, to consult on the entire document but point out that it is not necessary for previous respondents to repeat their views on parts of the Plan which have not changed because I will take previous representations into account.

I would also advise you to have regard to further changes in national policy, guidance, ministerial statements and legal judgements etc. While I remain of the view that other issues are capable of resolution through the examination process there is no guarantee, despite the Council's best efforts, that deficiencies will not remain which would render the Plan unsound.

Finally, could I ask you to keep the Programme Officer informed of any changes to your anticipated timetable or indeed any other matters which might affect progress on the Plan.

Yours sincerely,

*P R Crysell*  
Inspector