

[Local Plan Review Representation Guidance Notes 2021](#)

Before the LPA submits a local plan for examination, Regulation 19 (Of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) requires that the plan and a statement of the representations procedure is published on the LPA's website and put on deposit at its main office and other suitable venues (but please see the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020). The LPA must also send a statement of the representations procedure to the consultation bodies described in the Regulations and inform them of where and when the plan can be inspected. A period of at least six weeks must be allowed for representations on the plan to be made. The pre submission Local Plan Review consultation stage has chosen to run for eight weeks to take into account running over the summer period.

1. Introduction

1.1 The plan has been published by the Local Planning Authority [LPA] in order for representations to be made on it before it is submitted for examination by a Planning Inspector. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, [PCPA] states that the purpose of the examination is to consider whether the plan complies with the relevant legal requirements, including the duty to cooperate, and is sound. The Inspector will consider all representations on the plan that are made within the period set by the LPA.

1.2. To ensure an effective and fair examination, it is important that the Inspector and all other participants in the examination process are able to know who has made representations on the plan. The LPA will therefore ensure that the names of those making representations can be made available (including publication on the LPA's website) and taken into account by the Inspector.

2. Legal Compliance and Duty to Co-operate

2.1 The Inspector will first check that the Plan meets the legal requirements under s20(5)(a) and the duty to co-operate under s20(5)(c) of the PCPA before moving on to test for soundness.

2.2 You should consider the following before making a representation on legal compliance:

- The Plan in question should be included in the current Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the key stages should have been followed. The LDS is effectively a programme of work prepared by the LPA, setting out the Local Development Documents (LDDs) 19 it proposes to produce. It will set out the key stages in the production of any Plans which the LPA proposes to bring forward for independent examination. If the Plan is not in the current LDS it should not have been published for representations. The LDS should be on the LPA's website and available at its main offices.

- The process of community involvement for the Plan in question should be in general accordance with the LPA's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (where one exists). The SCI sets out the LPA's strategy for involving the community in the preparation and revision of LDDs (including Plans) and the consideration of planning applications.
- The Plan should comply with the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. On publication, the LPA must publish the documents prescribed in the Regulations, and make them available at its principal offices and on its website. The LPA must also notify the Local Plan bodies (as set out in the Regulations) and any persons who have requested to be notified.
- The LPA is required to provide a Sustainability Appraisal Report when it publishes a Plan. This should identify the process by which the Sustainability Appraisal has been carried out, and the baseline information used to inform the process and the outcomes of that process. Sustainability Appraisal is a tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect social, environmental, and economic factors.
- The Plan must have regard to any Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for its area (i.e. county and district). The SCS is usually prepared by the Local Strategic Partnership which is representative of a range of interests in the LPA's area. The SCS is subject to consultation but not to an independent examination.

2.3 You should consider the following before making a representation on compliance with the duty to co-operate:

- The duty to co-operate came into force on 15 November 2011 and any plan submitted for examination on or after this date will be examined for compliance. LPAs will be expected to provide evidence of how they have complied with any requirements arising from the duty.

Section 33A of the PCPA requires the LPA to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with neighbouring authorities and certain other bodies over strategic matters during the preparation of the plan. The LPA will be expected to provide evidence of how they have complied with the duty. Non-compliance with the duty to co-operate cannot be rectified after the submission of the plan. Therefore, the Inspector has no power to recommend modifications in this regard. Where the duty has not been complied with, the Inspector cannot recommend adoption of the plan.

3. Soundness

3.1 The tests of soundness are set out in paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Plans are sound if they are:

- Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs, and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring authorities is

accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;

- Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- Effective - deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working on cross boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the NPPF.

3.2 If you think the content of the plan is not sound because it does not include a policy on a particular issue, you should go through the following steps before making representations:

- Is the issue with which you are concerned already covered specifically by national planning policy?
- Is the issue with which you are concerned already covered by another policy in this plan?
- If the policy is not covered elsewhere, in what way is the plan unsound without the policy?
- If the plan is unsound without the policy, what should the policy say?

4. General advice

4.1 If you wish to make a representation seeking a modification to a plan or part of a plan you should set out clearly in what way you consider the plan or part of the plan is legally non-compliant or unsound, having regard as appropriate to the soundness criteria in paragraph 3.1 above.

4.2 Your representation should be supported by evidence wherever possible. It will be helpful if you also say precisely how you think the plan should be modified.

4.3 You should provide succinctly all the evidence and supporting information necessary to support your representation and your suggested modification. You should not assume that you will have a further opportunity to make submissions. Any further submissions after the plan has been submitted for examination may only be made if invited by the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he or she identifies.

4.4 Where groups or individuals share a common view on the plan, it would be very helpful if they would make a single representation which represents that view, rather than a large number of separate representations repeating the same points. In such cases the group should indicate how many people it is representing and how the representation has been authorised.

4.5 Please consider carefully how you would like your representation to be dealt with in the examination: whether you are content to rely on your written representation, or

whether you wish to take part in hearing session(s). Only representors who are seeking a change to the plan have a right to be heard at the hearing session(s), if they so request. In considering this, please note that written and oral representations carry the same weight and will be given equal consideration in the examination process.