

Place Directorate



Mrs Julia Gregory BSC(HONS) BTP MRTPI MCMI.
c/o Annette Feeney,
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Please ask for: Stephen Andrews
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17 May 2012

Dear Mrs Gregory

Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review (CSFR) Examination.

Thank you for your letter of the 18th April.

We welcome the setting of the date for the opening of your hearing into the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy Focused Review and that you have been appointed by the Inspectorate.

We have considered the content and wish to give you an update on progress with the tasks leading to the opening of the hearing and then make several comments about the process and the reopening of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan suspended last September.

The Council placed the requested material for the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) related consultations on the web site. We note that the Programme Officer will be giving you the support you need to collate the responses. The Council will respond to this consultation by Monday 4th June 2012.

Officers note the content of the CSFR matters that you will wish to hear and confirm that we have already completed a review of the CSFR using the NPPF checklist for compatibility published by Planning Advisory Service. Having had the benefit of the Draft NPPF the CSFR work undertaken was closely aligned to the golden thread and positive planning which the Framework now requires.

Although we have put in place a policy which goes some way to dealing with the Model Policy now proposed for the "Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development" it is likely* that we will request your specific modification in this respect under the terms of section 20(7C) of the 2004 Act. Currently the matter is addressed in the supporting text only and subject to the findings of your consultation we would want to upgrade to a full policy to achieve soundness without further delay.

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Acting Strategic Director (Place): Mike Hammond
Head of Economy: Peter Burrows, Head of Environment: Chris Fry

(* The Council will be seeking Counsel's opinion on a number of matters relating to process and the NPPF to ensure that we are serving the needs of the examination properly. We will also be asking for guidance on any potential risks.)

At the same time the Council has started the process of completing a self assessment of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan for compatibility with the NPPF. It has given rise to an understanding that several substantive issues / matters that you wished to hear evidence on for the Stowmarket Area Action Plan may now have become unnecessary - whether by virtue of acceptance of the CSFR and / or the introduction of the Framework itself. With this context, we would ask you therefore to consider:

- (i) If a reduction in hearing time for the Stowmarket Area Action Plan could be achieved in the light of your review of the matters you previously proposed in your letter of the 22nd August 2011 and their compatibility with the Framework?
- (ii) Whether such a reduction in the complexity of the hearing and the limited likelihood of there being anything amounting to controversy flowing from your CSFR hearing would allow you to consider putting dates in our work diaries, along with those of interested parties, during late July to help the Council move forward with its SAAP work sooner rather than later? This is particularly important for Mid Suffolk as the Planning Policy Team is being asked to service integration matters for the new joint working Councils.

We will be pleased to have a round table debate on the subject of cross border working and related matters such as employment. We would like to invite South Norfolk District Council and the Highways Agency who would be able to assist with Matters relating to northern employment and housing matters and the A14 respectively.

We await your further instruction concerning the CSFR issues and matters that you wish to hear.

Yours faithfully,

Stephen Andrews

Stephen Andrews
Professional Lead Officer Planning Policy

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