

Rt. Hon. James Brokenshire MP
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government
4th Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF



25th February 2019

Dear Secretary of State

I write in response to your letter, dated 28th January 2019, regarding intervention in the draft Thanet Local Plan, and directing the Council to undertake certain actions.

During the intervention process, the Council has demonstrated its commitment to getting a Local Plan in place, and I have to express some disappointment that this progress does not appear to be fully recognised in your letter.

We have submitted the draft Plan for Examination, which happened in the timescale that the Council had previously suggested, and as proposed in the most recent LDS. We now have two Inspectors appointed to carry out the Examination, and the public hearings are due to begin on Tuesday 2nd April.

Given that the draft Plan has been submitted for Examination and is now subject to the Examination process, it is difficult to understand what other steps the Council could have taken (since your intervention), to get the Local Plan in place.

With regard to the Direction set out in your letter to designate a lead Councillor and lead official to be responsible for progressing preparation of the draft Local Plan, the Council already has a Portfolio holder for the Local Plan (the Leader of the Council), and this is already published on the Council's [website](#). This will continue to be the case going forward.

As your officials will be aware, the Chief Executive has been directly involved in helping to drive the Local Plan process through what have been complex and difficult circumstances. The direct engagement of the most senior Member and Officer of the Council illustrates the importance the Council places on preparing a Local Plan.

From this point, the lead official will be Tim Willis, who is the Deputy Chief Executive, and has responsibility for the Local Plan.

In relation to the Direction for a review of the Local Plan within six months of adoption, the Council is fully aware that an early review of the Plan might be required to deal with matters related to the revised NPPF and to the outcome of the Airport DCO application. However, this will also properly be a matter for the Examination Inspectors for the draft Local Plan. The Council will make the required changes to the LDS, but subject to any findings by the Local Plan Inspectors.

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I also note your comments in relation to housing delivery. The Council has a draft Local Plan that identifies a land supply for the Plan period of over 18,000 dwellings; there are currently consents for over 3,100 units unstarted; and between April 2017 and September 2018, the Council granted consent for over 1,850 dwellings. The issues about housing delivery are a consequence of local market conditions, rather than any lack of activity by the Council.

The Council is, nevertheless, committed to encouraging housing delivery, and is working on a number of key measures to support such delivery. Officers at the Council have been seeking a meeting with your officials for some months to discuss these matters, meetings which have unfortunately been delayed on a number of occasions.

My officers have arranged to meet your officials on Friday 1st March to discuss these matters further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Bayford', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Cllr Bob Bayford
Leader of Thanet District Council

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