

VALE OF AYLESBURY LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

Inspector: Paul Clark BA MA MRTPI

Inspector's Questions to the Council:

Q104 - Q105

Q104 Paragraph 10.14.4 of the Sustainability Appraisal Main Report (CD/SUB/004) advises that the Council/Inspector should give consideration to suggested changes to the policy wording of the submitted plan. The paragraph summarises these, which are made in detail in earlier paragraphs of the document; paras 10.2.7 and 10.2.9 – setting detailed requirements for the “biodiversity gain” sought in several site allocations and policy NE2; paragraphs 10.3.5 and 10.3.6 – more stringent requirements for low carbon infrastructure in policy C3; paragraph 10.4.12 – seeking greater detail of the specific flood mitigation measures envisaged for allocation D-AGT3; paragraph 10.5.15 – further consideration to be given to targeted community infrastructure at two large sites, D-BUC046 and D-HAD007; paragraphs 10.11.4, 7 and 10 (2nd bullet) – policies dealing with water, noise and air pollution could all feasibly be supplemented with added detail; 10.12.7 – AGT policies might discuss links to the town centre more explicitly; and 10.13.4 – policy wording be added to ensure that schemes are designed with waste management in mind.

Although many of these appear to be suggestions for improvements, rather than issues of soundness and some are reiterations of suggestions made and considered at earlier stages of plan preparation and sustainability appraisal, others run parallel to matters of soundness which I have already raised in my questions Q23, Q48, 67 and 72 (allocations BUC 043, 046 and 051 and MMO006 in relation to waste water treatment provision), Qs24, 47 and 68 (allocation D-HAD007), Q58 (detailed provisions of allocation D-AGT3), Q95 (policy NE2), Q99 (policy C3). I would therefore welcome the Council's responses to the several recommendations made.

Q105 VALP's Habitats Regulation Assessment is based on a main report of 2016 evaluating an earlier version of the plan, supplemented by an update of 2017 which evaluates three main policy changes (S3, S4 and D4) to conclude that the original Assessment continues to hold true for the submission plan. “It is assumed that all other policies would remain unchanged.” However, paragraph 5.21 of the original report identifies two allocations which may have significant effects on the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC through disturbance caused by increased public access to the Ashbridge Estate. Paragraphs 5.22 and 5.23 of the original assessment concludes that the plan contains sufficient mitigation because policy I1 “specifically outlines the amount of and distance to sufficient green space and thus has the potential to offset recreational impacts.” That conclusion is reiterated in paragraph 6.2 of the original assessment.

However, policy I1 as submitted appears to have dropped the prescriptions for the provision of natural green spaces which was in the earlier version of the plan, so I have a concern that the provisions of the submitted plan may no longer justify the conclusion that likely significant effects on the SAC have been adequately mitigated. This concern reinforces the concerns expressed by the Sports Council (my Q42) and also representations made to policy I2 (Q100). I would appreciate the Council's observations on this point.

27.4.18