

Lichfield District Council

Examination of the Lichfield District Council Local Plan 2040

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11 October 2022

Dear Mr Fletcher

Inspectors' response to the Council's letters of 23 September 2022

1. Thank you for your letters dated 23 September 2022 and the accompanying reply statement, timetable, and other evidence documents.
2. We have considered your request for a formal pause in the Examination of approximately 9 to 12 months. While resourcing the Examination is entirely a matter for the Council, this should be balanced against the need to ensure that Examinations are completed as quickly as possible in the interests of all parties and are based on the most up to date evidence.
3. As such, we are content to allow a pause for a maximum of 12 months on the understanding that the Council will work to show reasonable steps are being taken throughout to ensure that the Examination can be resumed quickly. This would be a full pause, as a partial pause would not be appropriate in this instance given the lack of staff resources fundamentally affects the Council's and our ability to move forward, including the completion of further work.
4. To ensure effective monitoring and openness about progress during this pause period, we require updates from the Council on a monthly basis. These updates will allow us to understand the progress being made by the Council in appointing sufficient staff resources and in addressing the areas of work set out in our initial letter (INSP001). As the resourcing process moves forward in the coming months, we will expect the Council's monthly updates to set out clear dates and processes for the completion of areas of work and the submission of those documents to the Examination. Monthly updates should be received by the Programme Officer at the end of each calendar month, with the December update being provided before Christmas 2022.

5. The Council's further work will help us to determine how the Examination should proceed. However, it should be noted that our initial questions and requests for information are not exhaustive and the provision of new and updated documents may give rise to additional queries relating to soundness and/or legal compliance.
6. As part of addressing the concerns raised in our initial letter, the Council will also need to consider whether any of the results of the work being undertaken during the pause will require further consultation, equivalent in scope and duration to that carried out at Regulation 19 stage.
7. In the interests of transparency, please place this letter on the Examination website as swiftly as possible. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via the Programme Officer.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Gilbert

Darren McCreery

Inspectors