## Flintshire Local Development Plan 2015 - 2030 Examination

## Note of Pre-Hearings Meeting held on 12 Jan 2021 (online)

## 1. Opening and Introduction

The Inspector, Siân Worden (SEW) introduced herself and her colleague inspector, Claire MacFarlane, who are both Chartered Town Planners appointed by the Welsh Government Ministers to hold the examination into the soundness of the Flintshire Local Development Plan 2015 2030 (LDP).

Throughout the examination communications in Welsh will be welcomed. The translator was present and demonstrated to everyone how the translation facilities will work

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by asking those present to introduce themselves. We will then make brief comments on the matters to be covered, if necessary, then invite individuals to make their contribution in response to the points we have raised. The hearing will then progress under our guidance, drawing those present into the discussion to enable us to gain the information necessary to come to a firm decision on the matters identified. All participants can ask questions and join in the discussion. At the end of each session participants are asked to sum-up the main points of their arguments.

The hearings will be conducted on the basis that everyone has read the relevant documents, although participants will be able to refer to and elaborate on relevant points.

Those attending may bring with them professional advocates and witnesses, though there will normally be no formal presentation of evidence or cross-examination. There is no need for parties to bring advocates/legal representation. AR confirmed that the Council would not be legally represented.

The inspectors would progress the examination hearings in an effective and efficient manner, keeping a tight rein on the discussions and time taken. As part of that process we aim to minimise the amount of additional written material to that necessary to come to informed conclusions on the issues. In that way we hope to conduct a short, but focussed, series of hearings and, in turn, produce a short, focussed report.

AW confirmed that someone will be present at all times who has delegated authority to agree to changes to the LDP. He also stated that a delegation scheme was currently being agreed which he would be able to update the inspectors on by

The virtual, online format is quite new to most people and likely to result in a few glitches and unforeseen complications. The main advantage of being able to hold virtual hearings is that, despite the very challenging conditions all are living under at the moment, it will be possible to progress towards the adoption of the Flintshire LDP which is the essential document in ensuring the proper planning of the area. The main point for the Inspectors is that the online format should not disadvantage anyone who is entitled to be heard.

The hearing sessions will be held on the online platform Zoom (as PHM was) with all participants, including the inspectors, the PO, and the Council team, logging in via computers. They will also be open to observers.

SEW then stressed the difference between participants and observers as the virtual format made this less obvious. Only those who have submitted a duly made objection to the LDP are entitled to be heard and to participate in the hearing session/s relevant to their objection. If the hearings were taking place in a physical room, these participants would be seated around the table with the Inspectors and membe

ask and answer questions.

Anyone can observe a hearing. In a real room, observers would be seated in rows behind or at the side of the hearing table. Observers cannot speak at a hearing or participate in any way.

As all parties will be working from screens, which can be intensive and tiring, there will be regular breaks during the hearings, probably every 90 minutes or so. During a break please do not log off or exit the session but switch the mic and camera off.

of any communications submitted to the Council before the LDP was placed on deposit.

11. Availability of information

The PO maintains the e

all sites/allocations/policies which had been objected to and where objectors wished to attend hearings to discuss would be included on the programme;

requests for matters other than those identified on the programme to be discussed should be forwarded to the PO for consideration by the inspectors; alternative sites would not, however, be considered by the inspectors unless they found that the housing requirement and/or the housing allocations were insufficient;

as well as the material accompanying the LDP when submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), the inspectors had access via the Flintshire LDP and examination websites to all the information and documents prepared for previous stages in the preparation process;