

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councillor briefing update on the Joint Local Plan (January 2021)

The Regulation 19 Joint Local Plan (JLP) consultation closed on 24th December 2020. No further points can be made on the JLP following the end of the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission consultation.

The Councils must process, assign and store the duly made Regulation 19 JLP representations in a suitable manner for Examination. The Councils must also analyse, consider and prepare a summary statement of the main issues raised for publication when the JLP is formally Submitted under Regulation 22 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations. The full representations, together with all of the statutory supporting information such as notices and statements will be published at the Submission stage. This is currently scheduled for late March 2021.

All of the duly made Regulation 19 JLP representations, in full, are to be made available to an appointed independent Planning Inspector who will conduct the Examination of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan. The Examination is conducted in the public domain, meaning that all documents, correspondence and meetings will be publicly available through the Councils' websites. The public can attend any Examination Hearings (which may be virtual or in-person), although only persons and organisations who have made duly made representations to the Regulation 19 JLP have the right to take part in the Examination Hearings.

Full consideration must be given to the objections to both the JLP and the supporting Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment before the Councils can proceed to the Submission of the JLP for Examination. The Secretary of State will appoint an independent Planning Inspector to conduct the Examination. A Programme Officer will be appointed to work for the Inspector and provides a channel for all communications between the Inspector and the Councils and other participants.

Further information and guidance on the Examination process is available on the Government website – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-plans>.

The emerging JLP and decision taking

For decision taking, the policies in the emerging JLP are a material consideration with limited weight. Councillors are cautioned against treating the emerging JLP as attracting more than limited weight at this point in time in decision taking at Planning Committee.

The JLP is nevertheless the Councils' intended development strategy to be Submitted for Examination. To this extent the JLP represents a clear direction of travel for the location and delivery of growth for the Councils.

When the JLP is Submitted, together with publication of the full set of duly made representations, further advice regarding weight will be provided having regard to paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

If there are any further queries regarding the JLP, please contact the planning policy team at localplan@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk.