Dear Mr Gilbert (for the attention of the Planning Inspector)

**Local Plan Examination Consultation 2018 Monday 29 January 2018 to Monday 12 March 2019 - Stage 4 Documentation**

Keep It Green 2014 has undertaken a preliminary examination of the Stage 4 Documentation which was made available on the Council’s Timeline of Examination Events webpage as of Monday 29th January 2018.

Following this preliminary examination, Keep It Green 2014 has a number of comments to make before undertaking a detailed examination of the documentation.

Paragraph 2 of the Planning Inspector’s letter dated 20 December 2017 reported that it was agreed at the hearing session on 13 December 2017 that the Council would produce a Background Paper drawing together the various work streams that have been initiated in response to the Planning Inspector’s Interim Findings. The broad timescale agreed for the production of the Background Paper is quoted as "mid-January 2018".

The Background Paper (BP8) did not appear on the Council’s Consultation portal webpage or the Timeline of Examination Events webpage until 29 January 2018, i.e. the commencement of the Stage 4 public consultation.

It appears that the Background Paper (BP8) has now become the Council’s consultation document from which the Planning Inspector has already produced a Main Matters, Issues and Questions paper (IDO30).

It is not clear how the Planning Inspector has been able to formulate questions on the Background Paper (BP8) unless it was made available to her before being issued to participants, via the Local Plan Examination webpage.

In these circumstances how will the Planning Inspector pick up any additional or important issues raised by participants under the Stage 4 consultation deadline?

This is different to the methodology adopted under the Local Plan Publication Draft 2016 and the subsequent hearing sessions.

It appears from the documentation that "participants" are being invited to submit comments on the Council’s Background Paper via the consultation portal webpage together with written comments in the usual format to the Planning Inspector on the questions asked by her under the Main Matters, Issues and Questions paper (IDO30).

Note that whilst the Council’s consultation portal webpage indicates that "you can read and respond to the Inspector’s Matters, Issues and Questions by clicking the ‘read and comment’ button below”, the only document on the consultation portal appears to be the Council’s Background Paper 8 (BP8).
Incidentally, the phrase "read and comment" should have read "view and comment" as per the actual wording on the consultation portal.

Conversely, the Planning Inspector's Stage 4 Briefing note says at Paragraph 16 that "Responses to the MIQs will be posted via a link from the web site to the consultation portal so that they are available to all participants and anyone else who wishes to read them".

The Council and the Inspector's deadline of 12 March 2018 for submission of comments is noted with concern having regard to the volume of documentation which needs to be examined by participants, including the need to refer back to earlier hearing submissions and papers in order to submit consistent and constructive comments under Stage 4.

A period of 6 weeks would appear unreasonable, both for existing participants and those who did not submit comments under the 2016 consultation.

Additional sites have now been identified in villages etc., which may well lead to comments being submitted from such people who may well now be affected by these additional proposed sites.

The format, content and length of the consultation and supporting documentation is not helpful to participants in this regard.

How is the ordinary man or woman in the street in Barnsley supposed to keep up with all the information on the website?

The process would appear to be designed to thwart any participation from Barnsley residents, only those versed in planning matters seem to have any chance of participating.

There does need to be full transparency demonstrated and enough time allowed to participants to respond on such important issues if a level playing field is to be demonstrated.

The current six week timescale is harmful to this process and does not allow participants to undertake due diligence on the proposals having regard to the importance of the subject matter.

A minimum period of 8 weeks would have been much more understanding of the task facing participants.

Similarly the lead in time to the proposed dates 17, 18, 19, 20, 24 & 25 April 2018 for the Stage 4 hearing sessions does appear premature having regard to the points made above.

The final point of concern at this stage is on the Council's responsibilities under the Statement of Community Involvement referred to in section 2 of the Planning Inspector’s letter dated 20 December 2017.
The Barnsley Chronicle carried a Public Notice in the edition dated 26 January 2018.

Existing participants registered on the Council’s consultation data base received an E-Mail dated 29 January 2018.

Can the Planning Inspector confirm her understanding of what other measures the Council has taken to ensure that there has been full coverage throughout the Metropolitan Borough to all of the individual residents and communities, particularly those now affected by these latest proposals.

Regards

Keep It Green 2014

31 January 2018.