

We note, from our early reading of the representations made to the Councils' proposed modifications, that the objective assessment of housing need (OAHN) remains an area of dispute, notwithstanding the additional work undertaken for the Councils by Peter Brett Associates (RD/MC/040). We consider that it would be of great assistance to us, and could save time at the hearings, if the Councils were to coordinate a statement of common/uncommon ground (SOCG), involving representors who have provided either technical criticisms of the Councils' OAHN, or an alternative OAHN figure. The SOCG should consider the extent to which the Councils' approach to assessing housing need (the SHMA together with the PBA report) is consistent with advice in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). Where alternative methods of calculating OAHN are being proposed by representors, the SOCG should also focus on the key assumptions and methodology used, and the implications of these for the outcomes of the modelling.

As you know, we are aiming to publish the detailed Programme, together with Matters and Issues and the deadline for the submission of statements, for the first week of the resumed hearings in June, as soon as possible after you have provided us with full information relating to the consultation on the proposed modifications. You have undertaken to provide this by the end of this month (March). However, we thought it would be of assistance to provide you with advance warning of this request, in order that a SoCG can be submitted at the same time as the hearing statements. As the Programme Officer is away until the 4th April we are sending this letter via Mr Stephen Carnaby, the Inspectorate's case officer. Any further correspondence should be sent to the Programme Officer.

Laura Graham

Alan Wood

Inspectors