

Central Bedfordshire Local Plan

Consultation on Additional Evidence - FAQs

Background

The Council submitted its Local Plan to Government in February 2018. The Local Plan sets out a policy framework to guide development across the Council area up-to 2035, including to support the delivery of housing, employment and infrastructure. The Local Plan is now at the Examination stage where independent Planning Inspectors consider if the plan meets the appropriate requirements and if it can be adopted. This process has already involved public hearings that took place in May to July 2019. All the stages of the Examination are available on the Council's website at the following link: [Local Plan Examination](#).

What is this consultation for?

Following the Hearing Sessions held during May to July 2019, the Inspectors wrote to the Council on 30th September identifying some follow up questions. The Inspectors letter, [EXAM 69](#) can be viewed on the Council's website.

In response to the Inspector's letter, Central Bedfordshire Council commissioned and prepared additional evidence to address the questions raised. These additional evidence documents have now been submitted to the Inspectors for their consideration and are now the subject of the consultation

What is being consulted on?

The documents include three technical papers prepared by the Council, the Sustainability Appraisal Supplementary Report and six additional supporting evidence documents:

- Employment Technical Paper ([EXAM 112](#))
- Housing Technical Paper ([EXAM 113](#))
- Transport Technical Paper ([EXAM 114](#))
- Sustainability Appraisal of the CBC Local Plan – Supplementary Report ([EXAM 115](#)).
- Prologis Park Marston Gate Expansion Scheme Comparison Document ([EXAM 106](#))
- Sundon Rail Freight Interchange Alternative Site Assessment ([EXAM 107](#))
- Biggleswade Holme Farm Planning Design & Delivery Analysis Report ([EXAM 108](#))
- Employment Land Update ([EXAM 109](#))
- North Luton LVIA Addendum ([EXAM 110](#))
- Statement of Common Ground between Highways England & Central Bedfordshire Council ([EXAM 111](#))

The three technical papers respond to the Inspectors questions and summarise how the additional evidence addresses the matters raised. In some instances, the Council have included some draft proposed modifications, in an effort to assist the Inspector's. However, the Council are only seeking comments on the additional evidence, and it will be for the Inspector's to recommend any Main Modifications they feel are necessary to make the plan sound later in the process.

Any Main Modifications recommended by the Inspector's will be subject to separate public consultation as a statutory part of the Examination process at a later date.

The Supplementary Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report has been produced by independent consultants LUC, working on behalf of the Council, and also responds to the Inspector's questions.

Why are we holding the consultation now?

The additional evidence is being published for consultation at the request of the Planning Inspectors who are presiding over the CBC Local Plan Examination. It is important that anyone who wishes to participate in the Examination process has an opportunity to comment on any new evidence. Any comments submitted through the consultation will be forwarded to the Inspectors to assist their deliberations of the plan.

How long will the consultation be for?

The consultation will run for eight weeks from 10am 18 June 2020 to 5pm 12 August 2020. The consultation is extended to eight weeks from the more typical six weeks to make it easier for people to respond during the Covid-19 pandemic. Details of how to respond to the consultation are set out in the accompanying guidance note:

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/45/planning_policy/468/local_plan_-_overview/15

Do I need to re-submit my previous comments?

No. There is no need to resubmit your previous comments or representations. This is an on-going Examination and all previous comments are still relevant and have been taken into consideration. The Inspectors are only seeking comments on the additional evidence documents identified above.

How do I respond?

Please see the guidance note that explains how you can view the documents and how you can respond to the consultation.

Will there be any more consultation in the future?

Yes, as a statutory part of the Examination process any Main Modifications recommended by the Planning Inspector's that they consider necessary to make the plan sound, will be subject to further consultation. This consultation will take place after any additional hearing sessions that may be required have concluded, and once the Main Modifications have been agreed by the Inspectors. A timetable for the ongoing process will be outlined in due course.

What happens next?

Following this eight-week consultation period, the Council will process and pass on all representations received to the Inspectors. Once the Inspectors have considered the responses, they will determine if there is a need for further hearing sessions to discuss the issues.

If further Hearing Sessions are required, the Inspectors will issue the Council with a set of 'Matters, Issues & Questions' to which the Council and interested parties will provide Matter Statement(s) to address the points raised. The Inspectors will invite those interested parties to participate in the Hearings that have requested to do so and where they consider it is appropriate.

Following any Hearing Sessions, it is likely that the Inspectors will recommend any Main Modifications they consider necessary to make the plan sound that will be published for a further consultation period of 6 weeks.

The Inspectors will then consider all the evidence presented throughout the duration of the Examination to determine whether the Local Plan is 'sound'. They will then prepare a report of their conclusions. Once the Local Plan is found to be sound, it will be formally adopted by the Council.