

## Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan

### Hearings postponed

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Both the Council and I have been monitoring carefully the situation and advice in relation to the coronavirus (COVID-19). It is my role to make every effort to ensure that the examination of the local plan is not unnecessarily disrupted or delayed during this difficult time. However, it is also my role to ensure that the risk of spreading Covid-19 is minimised and to keep everyone attending the hearing sessions safe.

A number of people wishing to participate in the hearing sessions have voiced concerns about attending. In the present circumstances, that is entirely understandable. To ensure that everyone with a right to be heard can attend hearings safely, and to make sure that the examination proceeds as efficiently as possible given the circumstances, I have decided, in close liaison with the Council, that the hearing sessions currently scheduled for 16 March to 26 March, and on 7 and 8 April, should be cancelled and postponed to a later date.

You will appreciate that I am presently not able to give an indication of when the hearings will now take place. Both I and the Council will continue to monitor the situation and the advice provided. Once it is clear to me that holding the hearings would not risk spreading Covid-19 and that it is safe to proceed, I will ask the Council to make the necessary arrangements. I will issue a new timetable for the hearings at that point, and participants will be contacted directly.

This is a very fluid situation, with advice being kept under continuous review, so please ensure that you check the examination webpage regularly for any updates. My Programme Officer, Mrs St John Howe, will be happy to help if you are unsure about the latest developments or if you would like any assistance.

During this pause in the examination, I will not be accepting any further written representations or other material, unless I specifically request it.

*Simon Berkeley*

Inspector

13 March 2020