

South Hams Local Development Framework Site Allocations Development Plan Documents

Closing Statement

South Hams District Council

1. During the course of the examination hearings a wide range of evidence and opinion has been presented. Very little has been said to suggest that the priorities and objectives underlying the Site Allocations DPDs are wrong. On the contrary, the over-riding theme has been that it is important that real progress be made to assist delivery of those priorities and objectives.
2. That is why the Council needs to adopt the DPDs. They are fundamental to securing a supply of housing land and employment sites and enabling investment in the regeneration of local communities.
3. The DPDs proposals are not the only possible package of proposals that might have been made. But they are founded on a robust evidence base which provides relevant and objective information to guide site choices. The availability, sustainability and serviceability of a very wide range of potential sites (more than 300) has been assessed and consulted upon.
4. The Council has also commissioned work (by the Prince's Foundation) to give additional opportunity for communities to engage in the design of their localities, and has carried out further consultation in several places where outstanding issues were flagged up.
5. The Council has gone a long way to engage all stakeholders in the process and evidence of this is included in papers submitted to the examination. Clearly the Council cannot always close communication gaps which may arise within organisations, but it has worked hard to communicate and publicise the DPDs at every stage in the process. Furthermore, it will continue to work inclusively and collaboratively to advance masterplans and development briefs for proposed sites.
6. The Council will monitor delivery of the proposals, take measures to address under-performance against LDF targets and be flexible in its approach to addressing any issues that arise. Indeed, flexibility underpins the approach the Council has taken to the DPDs, providing a wide range of sites for consideration and scope to consider their phasing pre and post 2016. The Council will also provide a technical assessment of post 2016 and non-allocated sites to assist the inspectors' consideration of their relative merits.

7. We are also preparing further work to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land and provision for the longer term. What is already clear is that the Site Allocation DPDs are essential to address that provision. They cannot go significantly further than the requirements set by the Core Strategy, but neither should they fall significantly below them. The Council believes that the DPDs strike the right balance and that they pay due regard to local circumstances.
8. The Council is also suggesting a number of minor changes arising from discussions at the hearings which will help to secure the DPDs' fitness, and we will provide these in a schedule.
9. The Council aims to provide all these items before the close of the month (30th November 2010) and they will be available on the website for any comments to be made to the inspectors.
10. The Council is pleased to have made good progress with its LDF portfolio over recent years, but without site allocations in place it is difficult to make real progress against LDF objectives. It believes that the DPDs are well-founded and sound, and that they will provide a strong footing to address meaningfully the needs of local communities for homes and jobs.
11. On behalf of the whole South Hams community, we are grateful for a well run examination. The Council looks forward to receiving the inspectors' report and moving on to the DPDs' early adoption.