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Dear Mr Cunningham

Chippenham Site Allocations Plan (CSAP) – Examination in Public

Thank you for your comprehensive response to my request for a schedule and timetable of work to address the concerns which led to suspension of the Examination. The schedule is, as you say, complex and will be demanding for your officers to meet a March 2016 commitment for the commencement of consultation. In this respect the period of six months – to May 2016 – was proposed in order to give sufficient time to complete the additional work, including consideration of any modifications by Members. My assumption was that the consultation on proposed modifications would follow this period. In any event, the six months is not intended as a cut-off date and I am willing to assist the Council in whatever way possible to ensure the outcome is a Plan which can be found sound. I have noted and welcome the Council's approach to the Planning Advisory Service to engage their services in critical friend support.

The purpose of the meeting in January is to ensure that the Council's timetable is achievable through verbal updates. A time between Tuesday 19 and Thursday 21 January would be convenient so far as my availability is concerned and I confirm that the meeting would be open for the public to observe proceedings but not take an active part. To this end I would suggest an appropriate venue would be a committee room within the Council's offices rather than the larger venue provided in the Town Hall.

My letter of 16 November, penultimate paragraph, did indicate that addressing the concerns raised would involve a significant amount of additional work with the attendant risk that major changes to the Plan may be necessary. It was not my intention that the tenor of that advice is changed with the clarification. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (para 022 ID: 12-022-20140306) and para 024 (ID: 12-024-20140306) contain relevant guidance. My justification for suspending the proceedings (16 November) and the clarification (30 November) are intended to reflect that Guidance.

It is not, and never has been, my intention to predetermine the outcome of the Council's further work to be undertaken to address my identified concerns. In this

respect I hope that the outcome of the meeting in January will be a clear, focussed and appropriate way forward in terms of the future progress of the examination. As I have indicated, I am willing to do all I can to assist the Council, although I am restricted in this regard, and any advice is entirely without prejudice to my final conclusions on the soundness of the submitted Plan.

I would add that my approach to the operation of this Examination is governed by the principles for the operation of tribunals identified in the Franks Report of 1957 which underpin all of the Inspectorate's work. These are Openness; Fairness and Impartiality. The last of these has been characterised by decision-makers coming to their decisions with open minds.

Yours sincerely

Patrick T Whitehead (Inspector)