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Chairman: Councillor Steve Abbott

Chief Executive: David J Martin

Our Ref: KMG/P10

24 July 2018

Ann Skippers MRTPI  
Independent Examiner  
Ann Skippers Planning

Dear Ms Skippers

**Re: Corsham Neighbourhood Plan, Independent Examination,  
Invitation to the Town Council**

In response to your note dated 10 July, I thank you for giving the Town Council, as qualifying body, the opportunity to comment on the representations made during the Regulation 16 Consultation.

We have read through all the Regulation 16 comments and most require no further comment having been answered previously.

However, there are a few important points to make, to explain the rationale for their inclusion in the draft Corsham Neighbourhood Plan.

Supermarket - There were a small number of representations opposing a second supermarket in the town centre as proposed in CNP BE4. Earlier public consultation had identified the desire for another supermarket in Corsham due to the current poor provision and also concerns regarding town centre vitality (which are reported in the submitted Community Consultation Statement, Page 16 – Main issues raised by the first round of community consultation). The proposed policy which supports the provision of a second supermarket in the town centre is included in the draft Plan in the suggested location as this was identified as an area of opportunity within the Corsham Community Area Framework prepared by Wiltshire Council in 2016, the production of which was discussed with a wide range of Corsham Stakeholders (see Corsham Community Area Framework available at <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/corsham-area-framework.pdf>, Page 12). The intention of the policy is to attract more people into the town centre to help improve its economic vitality. An out-of-town supermarket would adversely affect the Corsham town centre and have a detrimental impact on the environment. Therefore, the draft Plan strongly supports a second supermarket.

MOD Land - Representations from the MOD that its estate should be excluded from the Neighbourhood Plan Area were addressed by Wiltshire Council when the Neighbourhood Plan Area was designated (see Basic Conditions Statement Appendix A, Part 5.5). The Town Council feel it is important that MOD estate is included in the Neighbourhood Plan Area to protect both the Batscape and character of the town. The MOD appears to have misunderstood policies E4 and HW4 as the policies do not state that all Green Infrastructure has public access. Details of the green infrastructure for the area were provided by Wiltshire Council (Corsham Neighbourhood Plan – Part 1 - Core Policies - Figure 6, Page 28).

Land North of Leaffield Industrial Estate - Comment ID 35 states land to north of Leaffield Industrial Estate should be excluded from the Green Buffer. Earlier public consultation identified the desire to protect green space, environment/heritage (Community Consultation Statement Page 16 – Main issues raised by the first round of community consultation). As part of the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, when asked 'How important do you think it is that individual settlements should remain physically separate from others to retain their identity (i.e. an undeveloped gap between Gastard and Corsham)?' of the 204 respondents, 174 felt that it was either essential or important (Community Consultation Statement, Page 22). Protecting against the coalescence of settlements is also one of the Framework Principles, as is defining or strengthening the townscape character to establish or reinforce the individual identity of each settlement. Other principles are that the landscape should be protected and enhanced where appropriate and the benefits of new development should be carefully considered against potential negative impacts (see Corsham Community Area Framework, Page 18). The whole of the Green Buffer was reviewed and amended between the Regulation 14 and Regulation 16 Consultations to ensure it only includes land necessary to prevent the coalescence of settlements and to reduce habitat fragmentation. It is essential that the land to the north of Leaffield Industrial Estate remains in the Green Buffer as it provides a very important transition between the SSSI adjacent to the railway line and connective habitat for the protected species of bats.

Batscape Strategy - Comment ID 42 raises concern about aspects of the Batscape Strategy. The Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC is an important constraint which significantly affects the future development of Corsham. Despite the protection afforded by the special designation, there are serious concerns that the quantity and quality of the remaining green spaces in, around and between Corsham's settlements have rapidly deteriorated in recent years, primarily through new housing development. There had been no comprehensive or co-ordinated studies until the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan research was carried out. This research brings together the existing information on the known bat habitats associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon SAC. The robust and comprehensive document has the full support of both Natural England and Wiltshire Council.

I trust this information is useful. Please contact me if any of the contents are unclear.

Yours sincerely



Kirsty Gilby  
Planning and Events Officer