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EXAMINATION INTO THE SOUNDNESS OF THE CITY OF YORK LOCAL PLAN

Inspectors: Simon Berkeley BA MA MRTPI and Andrew McCormack BSc (Hons) MRTPI

Neil Ferris

Corporate Director of Economy and Place

City of York Council

By email only

13 October 2020

Dear Mr Ferris

Examination of the City of York Local Plan

Thank you for your letter dated 6 October. We note its contents, along with that of the *Housing Need Update (2020)* ('the HNU') enclosed with it.

It is clear to us that the HNU now forms a key part of the Council's evidence in relation to the Local Plan housing requirement proposed. The Council's work updating the Green Belt Topic Paper Addendum and its Annexes will similarly be key evidence documents, and we note your intention to submit these to the examination soon, hopefully early next month. All of this will need to be the subject of consultation before the examination can proceed, and it will be necessary for us to scrutinise this evidence at hearing sessions.

Given the above, we will await submission of the updates to the Green Belt Topic Paper Addendum and its Annexes before indicating the next steps. As you will appreciate, much will depend on our initial review of this work and the degree to which it resolves the concerns we have previously raised. Once we have a clearer picture in this regard, we will write to you again setting out the way forward.

Until we have received and considered the aforementioned Green Belt documents, we will not be accepting any further comments from representors about the HNU or any other matters. We ask

that a notice to this effect be added to the examination webpages, to avoid unnecessary correspondence and work.

We note the current position in relation to the Habitat Regulations Assessment. Input from Natural England and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation will be important factors, and we welcome the Council's engagement with those bodies.

You ask whether we have identified any other areas of concern arising from the Phase 1 hearings. Our general approach here is to highlight significant soundness problems as and when we identify them. You can rest assured that we would not harbour serious concerns and continue with the examination without drawing attention to them, at the very least.

As you may be aware, given the situation in relation to Covid-19, other local plan examination hearings are currently proceeding either as wholly 'virtual' events – using Zoom, Microsoft Teams or other video conferencing applications – or as 'blended' events involving some, generally very limited physical elements along with the use of virtual technology. We ask that the Council now begins to consider how it might host examination hearing sessions in this context. To assist, we will open dialogue with your officers, through our Programme Officer Carole Crookes, to explore potential options.

Please ensure that a copy of this letter is placed on the examination webpage.

Yours sincerely

Simon Berkeley and *Andrew McCormack*

Inspectors