



Elmbridge

Borough Council

Ms Masters MA (Hons) FRTPI
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Dear Ms Masters,

Examination of the Elmbridge Local Plan

Thank you for your letter dated 11 September 2024. The Council, whilst disappointed at your findings, appreciates the level of detail in your letter and your clear direction that the Local Plan may be found sound with modifications.

The Council has reviewed the next steps as outlined at the end of your letter. There are several issues that the Council has been asked to address and reflecting on these, we also consider that a 6-month timetable would be challenging.

Accompanying this letter, the Council has set out a detailed timetable to complete the additional work required. However, it considers that a realistic timeframe for completing this work is at least 12-months. Clearly, the largest element of work for the Council to address is to seek to identify sufficient suitable and available sites to meet the local housing need, the five-year housing land supply and addressing affordable housing needs in the borough.

The Council is committed to achieving a sound local plan and the 12-month timetable put forward for you to consider is a robust and realistic assessment of completing the work. The timetable is divided into three areas of work some of which can be run concurrently. The first area of work is to identify the sites and start the assessment process and following this the detailed infrastructure assessment and work to identify what will be needed to support the level of housing and economic development proposed.

The Council is aware that it will need to work with partners such as the Environment Agency, Highways England, the NHS and Surrey County Council, as well as with the development industry to deliver the additional work and this is reflected in the timetable. Taking a proactive approach to achieve a sound Local Plan, a call for sites will commence next week to ensure the most up-to-date picture of the available land

(including land in the Green Belt) is before the Council when it formulates proposed modifications which seek to meet the local housing need and other needs.

The 12-month timetable does not however allow for the Council to engage with our communities. This is extremely important to the Council; ensuring that our Local Plan process remains transparent and that we take our residents with us, providing them with the opportunity to see and understand what is being considered and why. The Council understands that this is also important to the government and their pledge to ensure that local communities continue to shape housing building in their areas. Therefore, a 15-month timetable has also been prepared which includes community engagement.

The Council's preference would be for the 15-month timetable, but we will deliver the necessary modifications in the shorter period of time of 12-months if required.

In working proactively with us to secure a sound local plan we know you will need to be confident that the Council can complete the work within the agreed timeframe. The timetables enclosed are an accurate and deliverable programme of the additional work required. The Council is confident these timetables can be met.

To ensure that you and other parties are kept up to date of the Council's progress we will provide regular updates on the progress of the work, updating the project plan as milestones are completed and this will be published on our website alongside the tasks and actions lists that were commenced at the end of Stage 2.

Like the Government, the Council places great importance on a plan-led approach to development and achieving a sound Local Plan for the Borough is a priority. Our current policies are over 13 years old and having an up-to-date plan is of key importance. The accompanying letter from the Leader of the Council confirms this commitment, not only in addressing the issues that you have raised, but also in ensuring we have the resources to achieve this work.

The Council sincerely hopes that you are assured of its commitment to getting a Local Plan in place and can be confident that allowing this short programme of work will ensure the adoption of a sound local plan as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely



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