



Please reply to:

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Chief Executive  
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Our ref: DCM/  
Date: 8 May 2024

Dear Ms Montford,

I am writing to you as Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee to thank you for your letter of 2 May 2024, setting out the EA's comments on the Spelthorne Borough Local Plan strategic review. Whilst you have some key concerns around the soundness of the plan and require further information/additional changes, we are pleased to note that you "believe these issues can be overcome and are happy to continue to work with you to address these key issues." This is welcomed. It is clearly in everyone's interests to continue this dialogue, and move to a position where we can hopefully achieve a substantial measure of common ground (leaving other matters for discussion at Examination if the Inspector asks us to resume in due course).

Having read your letter, there are a couple of strategic matters which require a more definitive response. As a Council, we need to have a crystal clear understanding of your view in order to address it. Your letter states that from the EA's perspective Spelthorne should not be relying on the River Thames Scheme for future delivery of allocated sites. Could you confirm whether or not you expect all these sites to be removed from the Plan allocations completely. You also state that "only when the scheme is constructed and operational will the reduction in flood risk for the area be realised". As a Council we clearly want our residents to be safe - both current and future. We have already taken the proactive decision to ask the Inspector to move some higher risk sites further back in the plan period, and have made it clear they would not be progressed until the RTS is 'operational and effective'. We are therefore struggling to understand why we cannot rely in the RTS for these allocations when they will *only come forward* when the scheme is in place, and the 'reduction in flood risk will be realised'. On this basis we believed that inclusion of some sites which are dependent on the scheme would be reasonable. Please could you provide further justification so there is absolute clarity on this point.

Related to this, you have also advised that no specific evidence has been provided on how a number of sites will be safely delivered despite flood risks constraints, and point specifically to issue with access and egress (on site and/or proposed routes). It is not at all clear to the Council what this means for each allocation site, and therefore what mitigation measures and

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technical solutions we as a Council need to look to put in place. Please can you advise what types of positive measures the EA would find acceptable on each and every site so we as a Council do not spend valuable time and resources considering options which would not fit the bill.

I note from your letter that there is an apparent disparity between information included in the SFRA submitted, and other correspondence you've received, including the decision of the E&S Committee. I have asked officers to look at this and other more minor points of clarification, and come back to you separately.

Since we are simply asking for further clarity, I would appreciate confirmation that a reply will be forthcoming in the next two weeks so that as a Council we can then look to address immediately. If you feel a meeting would be helpful then officers are more than happy to accommodate this. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to be 'M Beecher', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Malcolm Beecher  
Chair of Environment & Sustainability Committee

