



Cabinet Office

Oik Coonceil ny Shirveishee

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Chief Operating Officer:
Dr Megan Mathias

08 May 2024

Mr Derek Sewell
Town Clerk, Peel Town Commissioners
Town Hall
Derby Road
Peel
IM5 1RG

Dear Mr Sewell

Draft Area Plan for the North and West

Thank you for your letter of the 3 May 2024 in which you request that the Cabinet Office undertake a further consultation on the proposed changes to the draft Area Plan. Your concerns and observations are noted.

With regard to the time afforded to new respondents to register their interest, please note that:

- the public inquiry papers including proposed changes to the draft plan for consideration at the inquiry were published on 22 March 2024; the public were advised at this point of the need to register in due course
- a further public notice was published on 19 April 2024 stating that registration would open on 22 April 2024; notice was given that registrations would close on 10 May 2024 and that all evidence should be submitted by 21 June 2024
- a range of communication channels have been used for public messaging of the above, including press releases, radio advertising, sponsored posts on social media channels and a full page advert in the Courier newspaper.

This wider view of the timetable confirms that some 13 weeks has been allowed from confirmation of the public inquiry to the final date to submit evidence.

Looking more broadly at the inquiry process, the Inspector in his Guidance [published 22 April 2024] set out his approach to consideration of the published Major Changes, some of which are now the subject of particular concern to Peel Town Commissioners. This Guidance was informed by the Inspector's *'Initial note and questions to the Cabinet Office Policy Team'*; the questions and their answers being published subsequently on the Government website.

Your points about housing density will be examined by the Inspector at the inquiry. The Planning Policy team is to publish further information on this topic by the end of the week.

The proposed changes will be properly considered in the course of the inquiry, alongside the draft Area Plan as previously subject to public consultation. You will have seen in the Inspector's draft outline programme that 'Public Consultation' is listed among the General Considerations to be addressed on the opening day of the inquiry in July.

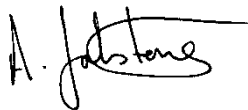
Thus, the vehicle for the consideration of the Commissioners' new concerns is the inquiry itself, and the Inspector's final report will contain his independent recommendations as to whether any of the changes should be included in the Area Plan to be considered for adoption. It should be noted that the adoption process does not commence until Cabinet Office has published and considered the Inspector's final report.

It is the view of Cabinet Office that there has been sufficient time to 10 May for any party concerned regarding the proposed Major Changes to register to submit further written or oral evidence. I would add that such Written Representations or Position Statements are not themselves required until 21 June 2024.

I have shared your concerns with the Inspector. While noting that the plan preparation and the inquiry process itself are not matters directly for him, he has advised that he is content that the procedure agreed as set out in the published Guidance can provide a fair, proper and rigorous examination of all matters of concern.

Please be assured that your concerns have been considered, however I confirm that the public inquiry will proceed as planned. Cabinet Office would encourage all those seeking to contribute to the inquiry to register their interest, submit representations or statements by the published deadline and make the most of the opportunity to discuss draft Area Plan matters with the Inspector at the inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Johnstone', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andy Johnstone
Programme Officer
Cabinet Office

cc. Mrs D Kelsey MLC, Departmental Member for Planning Policy
Hon K A Lord-Brennan MHK
Hon T Crookall MHK