

Addendum to the Inspector's Report

COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SPORT AND RECREATION POLICY OMISSION

Objections to Draft Deposit

Draft Deposit Objections unconditionally withdrawn

Ref No	a	b	c	d	Name	Agent	Response Ref.
071	O	001	OM		Mr Ian Winstanley		
536	O	001	OM		HM Prison Service		
577	O	001	OM		Lower Ince Community Development Group		

Note

After the submission of this report, the local planning authority confirmed that objections 536/001 and 577/001 had not been unconditionally withdrawn. I, therefore, present the following section as an addendum to my submitted report.

Main issues

Whether the UDP is appropriate, having regard to:

- The identification of a site for a new prison.
- The identification of relevant policies and proposals for land at Wilding Street, Lower Ince.

Inspector's considerations and conclusions

The identification of a site for a new prison

12.61 An objector with specific responsibility for the operation of HM Prison Service refers to the significant rise in the prison population. He refers to the advice of PPG12 (paragraph 4.14) and, at FDD stage, argues that the UDP should incorporate a policy and/or an allocation of land for a new prison. Although the Wigan area has been identified by the objector as a priority area of search, the objector does not propose a particular site for this purpose.

12.62 Circular 03/98: 'Planning for Future Prison Development' (paragraph 4) advises that the identification of possible sites for new prisons is neither a quick nor an easy process. The statutory objectives falling on the Prison Service can be discharged only if all parties work together. The Circular identifies the sort of site search criteria that will be relevant. Although it identifies that sites should ideally be of about 16ha, the objector confirms that sites of as little as 8ha will be considered.

12.63 The LPA, prior to the RDD stage, expressed in writing its willingness to work with the objector to identify a site for a new prison, but received no response from that body. PPG12 (paragraph 6.24) advises that the provisions of development plans must be realistic and likely to be implemented during the period of the plan. Given the lack of response by the objector to the invitation to joint working, and the consequent uncertainty as to whether a site meeting the search criteria can be identified, there is no clear justification for making a specific allocation of land for this purpose.

12.64 The RDD does, however, in policies C1 and C1A, make provision for community facilities subject to the particular scheme satisfying stated criteria. Those policies provide the framework within which a particular proposal for a new prison could be determined should one arise within the area of the LPA during the plan period.

The identification of relevant policies and proposals for land at Wilding Street, Lower Ince

12.65 An objector argues that the UDP should present the intentions of the LPA in relation to an extensive area of unused land adjacent to Wilding Street, Lower Ince. The RDD does this via the Proposals Map which confirms that the majority of the land in question is to be subject to policy EV1A, part is to be subject to policy A1P and part to policy C1G. To the extent that duly made objections have been made to these policies, I deal with them elsewhere in this report.

12.66 The objector does not, himself, advocate any preferred policies or proposals for the land adjacent to Wilding Street. Part of the site was recently developed by the erection of a health centre, and the objector refers to current initiatives which may lead to other community and employment schemes. The LPA confirms that the progress made with such projects depends, in large measure, on securing public sector funding. Having regard to the advice of PPG12 (paragraph 6.24) the lack of certainty in respect of their implementation leads me to conclude that the UDP should not present these possible projects as firm development allocations. RDD policies C1, C1A and EM1C provide the context within which a proposal for a new community facility or employment development can be determined. The consultation on the FDD and RDD has provided ample opportunity for interested persons to express their views on the merits of these.

Recommendation

I recommend:

(REC 12.12) that no modification be made to the RDD in response to these objections.