



# The Planning Inspectorate

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Ms J Redfearn  
Chief Executive  
Wigan MBC  
Town Hall  
Library Street  
WIGAN

Your Ref:

Our Ref: DP505

Date: 08 September 2005

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Dear Madam

## WIGAN UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: REPORT ON THE OBJECTIONS

1. I have the honour to report that on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2004 I opened a public inquiry into objections to the Revised Deposit Draft of the Wigan Unitary Development Plan. This plan was prepared by the Wigan Borough Council under section 12 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by schedule 4 to the Planning and Compensation Act 1991. A pre-inquiry meeting was held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2004 to make necessary procedural arrangements. Prior to the inquiry I carried out a familiarisation tour of the District. The inquiry required a total of 18.5 inspector sitting days and was formally closed on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2005. During and after the inquiry I visited objection sites on both an accompanied and an unaccompanied basis on a total of 22.5 days.
2. The First Deposit Draft plan was placed on deposit in April 2003 for a period of 6 weeks. The Revised Deposit Draft was placed on deposit in February 2004 for the same period. Following its consideration of the objections to the Revised Deposit Draft the Council published a proposed Pre-inquiry Change on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2004. It also agreed a list of During-inquiry Changes.
3. Some 1390 representations were made to the First Deposit Draft plan of which 264 were expressions of support and 104 were objections which were later unconditionally withdrawn. Some 1022 objections were carried forward from the First Deposit Draft to be considered at the inquiry. At Revised Deposit Draft stage a total of 5488 representations were made. Of these, 50 were expressions of support and 10 were objections which were later unconditionally withdrawn. Some 5428 objections arose in relation to the Revised Deposit Draft for consideration at the inquiry.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



4. In response to the proposed Pre-inquiry Change one objection was made which was later unconditionally withdrawn. The proposed During-inquiry Changes were not published by the Council. The Council accepted no late representations. Of the 6450 objections to be considered in this report, some 4375 were identical objections made in respect of 17 different policies. Of some 2100 individual objections to be dealt with some 16 were dealt with by inquiry sessions, 288 were dealt with by hearing sessions and some 1800 were dealt with by written representations. As this is a report into the objections to the Unitary Development Plan only brief reference is made to the expressions of support.
5. In my consideration of the objections I have had regard to all submissions made by or on behalf of the various objectors and the Council, and to the framework of advice provided by current planning policy guidance notes, planning policy statements, circulars and the Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13). In the period since objections were made at First Deposit Draft and Revised Deposit Draft stages, Planning Policy Guidance Notes 1, 6, 7 and 10 have been replaced with Planning Policy Statements 1, 6, 7 and 10 and Circular 1/97 has been replaced with Circular 05/2005. I have taken these into account in making my recommendations. The Council should have regard to their content in its consideration of my report and will need to take into account any further planning policy statements or circulars published between the completion of my report and the adoption of the Unitary Development Plan. I have not had regard to changes in local planning circumstances subsequent to my closing of the inquiry. The Council will need to take such changes into account in its consideration of my recommendations.
6. My report, which is based on a 'skeleton report' provided by the Council, is submitted in both a printed version and upon a CD. I have structured it so that it follows the order of the Unitary Development Plan itself and have, in the interests of reduced reporting time, adopted an issues-based reporting style rather than one in which the cases of the objectors and the Council are reported in full in separate sections. Objections made in writing have been given equal weight to those made orally at the inquiry. A full set of all documents can be found in the inquiry library.
7. The document 'Local Plans and Unitary Development Plans – A Guide to Procedures' (paragraph 39) clarifies that the plan considered at the inquiry, and therefore also in my report, is the Revised Deposit Draft. Objections which are made at First Deposit Draft stage, and which are not resolved by the Revised Deposit Draft and unconditionally withdrawn, are carried forward for consideration by the inquiry process.
8. The reference numbers of the objections and of the supporting representations relating to particular policies are set out at the start of each section of the report, together with the references to the Council's response documents. At the start of each section I have indicated if a Pre-inquiry or During-inquiry Change is proposed. Paragraphs and recommendations are numbered in a two element system, the first part of which represents the report chapter.
9. Where particular elements of the First Deposit Draft and Revised Deposit Draft have been subject to objections, these are considered in this report. Where these have not been the subject of objections, I make no comment

upon their merits. This consideration of some elements of the emerging replacement plan, but not of others, derives from my remit to consider only those aspects of the Unitary Development Plan which are the subject of duly made objections. It is an inevitable consequence of the statutory procedures relating to development plan preparation, and may lead to inconsistency between individual elements of the plan which it is not within my remit to address. It is for the Council, at modification stage, to secure that any inconsistencies which result from this inevitably partial appraisal are identified and resolved.

### *Main issues*

10. The main issues in my report concern the merits of the proposed A5225 Wigan and Hindley Bypass (policy A1P [1]) and the implications of this road for the employment land resource. For the reasons I give I have concluded that, although this scheme has the potential to make a significant contribution to the achievement of a sustainable pattern of settlement in the Borough, there is no realistic prospect that a start on this project could be achieved within the plan period. Having regard to the advice of PPG12 (paragraph 5.17) I have recommended that land should not be safeguarded for that scheme.
11. The Council, itself, both within the Unitary Development Plan and in the evidence it presented to the inquiry, emphasised the importance of the proposed A5225 road for the achievement of the full potential of several proposed Primary Employment Areas. My conclusion that land should not be safeguarded for the construction of that road, together with other factors relating to employment land supply and requirement, has led me to conclude that several proposed Primary Employment Areas should not be pursued and that additional land should be identified for employment. For the reasons I give, I recommend that one such additional Primary Employment Area should be designated at Chaddock Lane, Astley.
12. Finally I would like to record my appreciation for the helpful attitude of all those who participated in the inquiry. In particular I would like to thank my Programme Officer, Mr J Riddle, who performed his duties with attention to detail, efficiency and good humour.

Yours faithfully

P F Young MRICS MRTPI  
Inspector

cc: the Government Office for the North West, Sunley Tower, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4BE