Dear Mr Shepherd

1. Thank you for your letter of 14 January 2014 from which I note that your Council wishes to proceed with the Examination and me to continue with the preparation of my Report. Thank you also for the formal request that I recommend modifications to make the Core Strategy sound.

2. As you say, paragraph 48 of the Framework indicates that an allowance can be made for windfall sites in the 5-year supply of housing land. It does seem reasonable to assume that these sites will continue to come forward and maybe result in an annual average of 100 or so additional dwellings. By their very nature, however, these sites and the results of their development are unpredictable, and I think that it would be better to regard them as augmenting the supply. It would better accord with the Government’s policy of boosting significantly the supply of housing. I would ask you to bear this point in mind as you draft the relevant Main Modification and there will, of course, be an opportunity for you and others to comment upon it as part of the consultation exercise. I shall then take those representations into account.

3. I agree with you that ED36 and ED63 should be the subject of Main Modifications. Participants will have already had an opportunity to comment upon Appendix 1 of your Council’s response to Matter 1, but I think it would be prudent to consult upon it as a Main Modification. It would also be useful to consult on RMA/26 as a Main Modification, with Mr Bolton’s ED/74 as an appendix to it. The 2 documents could then be considered together. I would appreciate a copy of your Schedule of Changes to ascertain any other changes which should be the subject of consultation as Main Modifications.

4. There are a couple of other things on which I should appreciate your help. During the discussion on affordable housing, I was told that the current 25% policy was adopted in 2008 and that the Council was achieving 25% affordability. Could you let me have some figures to give me some idea of the effectiveness so far in achieving this percentage. In its representation 528318, the Coal Authority refers to an indicative plan showing the broad areas of mineral resources (surface coal, limestone and brick clay) within the Borough. This, apparently, is to be included within the Core Strategy. Please let me know the latest position on this.

Yours sincerely

Richard E Hollox
Inspector

18 January 2014