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Date: 12 December 2006  
Our Ref: EMP 2810/2830/475/5

Dear Mr Fox

### **Joint Local Development Scheme**

I understand you would like some comments on the draft Local Development Scheme (LDS) that was sent to GOEM at the end of October. I am happy to supply my initial thoughts ahead of the formal submission of the LDS, I did provide input to the wider joint team on the 4<sup>th</sup> November and email comments to Andy D'Arcy on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2006 related to the extended LDS.

I am concerned that this joint timetable is very ambitious (particularly for South Northants and Daventry). As a result I believe that the current programme is likely to be very difficult to deliver. I am not convinced from the information in the LDS, that the local development documents and Supplementary Planning Documents highlighted have been adequately scoped to give clear indications of the remit of the documents and to define resources for delivery. I am concerned that insufficient resource is being directed to the joint core strategy which really should be the key priority. It is essential that you revisit the LDS to ensure key documents are provided to time and priority. It is also important to understand peaks and troughs in workload and this did not appear to be set out in the draft LDS.

Some points for further consideration include looking at synergies between documents and potentially amalgamating documents (Can the site allocations for Brackley and Towcester incorporate the design guides for instance?); preparing further joint documents (e.g. for affordable housing documents and development control documents); rationalising the number of SPD's; saving appropriate local plan policies; revising the timing of certain documents (there is advice emerging on climate change that could reasonably be used in a merged sustainable design and energy efficiency document).

The LDS is a public statement of a local planning authority's programme for the production of local development documents. It is also becoming an increasingly important document for measuring performance. It is therefore essential that the programme is realistic. You will have seen from recent correspondence from Communities and Local Government and GOEM in the first week of December that the LDS approved as a result of this years



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Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) will play a key role in future performance assessments. It is also anticipated that in future the LDS will be revised each year following on from the findings of the AMR. This will also give you scope to introduce new documents should performance be better than expected.

In conclusion, the programme you have highlighted is far more ambitious than any other LDS I have seen to date. It also doesn't appear to reflect past performance and key priorities. I would ask you draw the above to the attention of your members and reconsider the content of the LDS before submission to the Government Office. It would be far better to resolve matters now rather than through the formal process in January.

Yours sincerely



Christine Sarris  
Planning Manager - Northamptonshire Directorate

