18th June 2012

Dear Mr Hetherington

Re: EXAMINATION OF THE SHEPWAY CORE STRATEGY (CS)

Thank you for your letter dated 13th June 2012 providing notification that you will delay the preparation of your report for the time being. Your comments regarding the challenging nature of the timescale are noted and I can confirm that the Council will review the timetable, on an ongoing basis, as it undertakes more detailed work in relation to the work streams set out in appendix 1, and notify you immediately of any proposed changes to the timescale via the Programme Officer.

The Council also notes your comments in relation to the schedule of changes, and I would highlight the Council’s intention to produce a consolidated schedule of changes as part of the process set out in Appendix 1 (point D) and for this schedule of changes to be subject to consultation. It is confirmed this will relate to the July 2011 Core Strategy version exclusively, and will be presented in plan order, and will include fully illustrated revised diagrams and map inserts.

I can also confirm that the Council is intending to suggest modifications to the plan in order to provide clarity in respect of the sequential assessment of housing development in excess of that required to maintain the sustainability of the local community, with particular reference to the Romney Marsh Character Area. These will be included in the proposed consolidated schedule of changes.

With regard to your comment in relation to the model policy, in respect of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Council notes the need for this policy to be given due prominence within the document in order to meet the test of consistency with national policy. However, I would like to clarify that whilst the Council’s proposed change suggests incorporating the model policy in the plan followed by Policy CSD10 text, the suggested change also involves moving that unified policy to a position at the front of the document in order to emphasise the importance of implementing sustainable development within Shepway. It would be the first policy in the plan, with CSD9 now forming the final policy.

I am grateful for your offer of advice or clarification and as requested I will endeavour to keep you informed of any significant matters occurring during the suspension period that may bear upon the examination, for example the decision from the Secretary of State/Minister in relation to the planning applications for Lydd Airport. I intend to include such matters within brief progress reports that will be made available to you via the Programme Officer.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Lewis
Head of Planning Services