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**Inspector: David Spencer BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

**EXAMINATION INTO THE SOUNDNESS OF THE HARTLEPOOL LOCAL PLAN**

12 April 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

On 23 March 2017 Hartlepool Borough Council formally submitted the Hartlepool Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

The Secretary of State has appointed Inspector David Spencer BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI of the Planning Inspectorate to conduct the Examination to determine whether the Plan is sound.

I have been appointed as the Programme Officer for the Examination of the Hartlepool Local Plan and will be assisting the Inspector with all aspects of the examination administration. I am independent of the Council during this process.

The Inspector will decide who should be invited to take part in the debates at the public hearings.

The Inspector is currently giving thought to the hearing sessions that will be required during the Examination, based on the Council's indication that the hearings could be held in late June/early July 2017. Although no dates have yet been set an important element in the organisation of the hearings is identifying representors who wish to appear and present their representation orally. Please note that written representations made when the Plan was published 9 December 2016 will carry the same weight as representations that are made in person during the hearing sessions. The Inspector would like to stress that the right to appear and be heard is limited to those persons defined in section 20 (6) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (i.e. any person(s) that has made representations seeking a change to the Plan). Consequently, supporters of policies or allocations do not have a right to appear as it is for the Council to justify the contents of its Plan.

In order to assist me in drawing up the draft hearings programme I would be grateful if you would indicate whether or not you wish to take part in the hearings and present your representation orally. **Please respond to me no later than Friday 28 April 2017 if your intention is to attend the examination hearings.** If I do not hear from you by that date, I will presume that you do NOT wish to be invited to participate at the hearings.

Where a representation was made by signing a petition and/or a standard letter of objection the preference would be for only the petition/standard letter organisers to take part in the hearings and present the representation(s) orally on behalf of the other representors.

If you wish to keep up-to-date with what is happening, please go to the Examination website at: <https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/localplan>. Copies of all submission documents together with the Examination library are also available to download from the website. Reference copies of all documents and supporting evidence submitted to the Secretary of State are available to view during normal office hours (by appointment) at the Hartlepool Borough Council's offices at the Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY. Please use my contact details to contact me to arrange an appointment.

I will be in contact again when I have further information about the Examination. If you have any further questions about the Examination, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

*Carole Crookes*

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Programme Officer