



Economic Development Directorate

Director – J E Meek BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

Civic Centre • Carlisle • CA3 8QG

Telephone: (01228) 817000 • Fax: (01228) 817115

Type talk please ring 0800 95 95 98 www.carlisle.gov.uk www.discovercarlisle.co.uk

Mr Aftab Khan
AWAZ
(Via Email)

Please ask for:

Direct Line:

Email:

Your ref:

Our ref:

Garry Legg

01228 817160

garry.legg@carlisle.gov.uk

026-SUB-EQIA

15th January 2016

Dear Mr Khan,

Carlisle City Council Local Plan Examination (Matter 4) and Equality Impact Assessments

I write in response to your correspondence addressed to my colleague Helen Jackson dated the 27th November 2015 and relating to the above. At the outset I must apologise for the delay in responding to you. As you will appreciate we were engaged in the process of preparing for our Local Plan Examination in Public (EiP) at this time and whilst we had intended to contact you in advance of the second week of hearings, and therefore the session relating to Travellers, such intentions were overtaken by the serious flooding which occurred and the consequential postponement of the EiP.

It is logical and I think most helpful to respond to you on each of the issues you raise in turn.

Firstly, and concerning the Local Plan EiP, I must advise that it is not standard practice to retract and revise already submitted statements at this stage of the process. Instead the Council is normally afforded an opportunity to provide any necessary updates verbally at the outset of the hearing session. I can confirm that the City Council will use this opportunity to address the issue you raise with respect to para 1.15 on page 6 of the City Council's Statement on Matter 4 [Doc Ref. EL2.012d].

With respect to this issue it is accepted that as drafted this statement could be misleading. This oversight arose however from a genuine misunderstanding of the Council's process of engaging stakeholders on the EqlA and as such it should have instead referred to you having been specifically notified, alongside others, of the opportunity to comment on the EqlA at various stages as opposed to being "*specifically engaged*". This reflects, as you are aware, that you are one of several stakeholders specifically identified by the City Council as of relevance with respect to the preparation of EqlAs.

With regards to the remainder of para 1.15 we note from an earlier consultation response to the Local Plan that AWAZ were aware of the Plans preparation and based on the helpful comments submitted, specific to the inclusion of Traveller site allocations, aware of the implications of the Plan on this particular community which you represent. We have previously shared with you an example of a further and later notification specifically sent to AWAZ inviting comments on the Plan and its proposals as it evolved.

Notwithstanding your views concerning your own notification I would highlight for the avoidance of doubt that an EqlA has been published alongside the Plan for consultation at key stages of its preparation. Similarly at key stages the report and draft of the Plan taken through the Council's committee cycle has been supported by a number of background documents with these often highlighted within the covering reports as being available, including the EqlA. In this regard it can evidently be seen that due regard has indeed been afforded to consideration of equality impacts arising from the Plan, with ample transparency and multiple opportunities to comment on the approach.


The issues you raise with respect to the Local Plan are evidently the focus of discussion on the 19th January and I am pleased to note that you will be attending and participating. As such you will have the opportunity to discuss your concerns with us in front of the Inspector which seems an appropriate and useful approach.

Beyond the issues of the Local Plan and with respect to EqlAs more generally, I note with concern your contentions regarding the undertaking of EqlAs. I would hope that the recent example where AWAZ were voluntarily engaged to comment on the equality impacts of the Council's Low Cost Home Ownership Policy, and the nature of this engagement, demonstrate that the City Council can be seen to take such duties seriously, with the Council's role in helping to establish AWAZ in the first instance also testament to this.

Notwithstanding the above it would seem timely to meet and have an open discussion on how working arrangements can be improved including clarity on each of our roles and expectations. This should act to ensure that we can move forward with a robust degree of confidence regarding how and when AWAZ should be notified or beyond this engaged and importantly act to ensure a degree of consistency concerning future approaches. In this same regard we welcome your invitation to support the Council in reviewing Equality objectives to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Act 2010. The Council is undertaking a review of its Equality Policy and equality objectives and will soon invite relevant stakeholders to participate in the consultation on this work. AWAZ are one of many equality groups in Carlisle that we recognise as stakeholders with a specific interest in protected characteristics. If amenable we can perhaps act swiftly to get a confirmed date in the diary to meet?

Thank you for voicing your concerns on the above matters and we look forward to working with you to positively address any residual concerns.

Yours sincerely,



G Legg

Investment & Policy Manager

Economic Development

cc. Steven O Keefe (Carlisle City Council), Margaret Miller (Carlisle City Council), Tony Blackburn (Local Plan Programme Officer)