There are a couple of matters that I wish to raise with the Council at this stage. The Council has set out in the Legal Compliance and Soundness Self-Assessment document (March 2011) that it accepts that certain elements of the Core Strategy (Revised Proposed Submission Version October 2010) do not conform fully with the South East Plan. The self-assessment document refers to the local justification for these differences and to the government’s stated policy commitment to abolish the regional tier of development plan policy. However, in the light of S24 of the Act, it will be helpful to have the Council’s view on whether the Core Strategy, notwithstanding the specific differences referred to above, remains in general conformity with the South East Plan and therefore satisfies the statutory requirement. If the Council’s written response can be provided by 13 May at the latest it will assist the preparation of hearing statements (for which a deadline will be set in due course).

Secondly, in the light of the High Court’s recent judgement in relation to the Forest Heath Core Strategy (Save Historic Newmarket Ltd v. Forest Heath District Council [2011] EWHC 606) would the Council please confirm at the same time if in its view it has fully complied with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and associated regulations. In particular, is the Council satisfied that the report accompanying the draft plan adequately summarises or repeats the reasons that were given for rejecting the alternatives at the time when they were ruled out (and that those reasons are still valid)?

Mary Travers
Inspector

14 April 2011