

## **Circular 32/1996: town and country planning code of practice for local plan inquiries**

Previous Circular Cancelled: 7/1985  
The Chief Executive  
Local Authorities

Our ref: PGB/5/3/1  
25 September 1996

Dear Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR LOCAL PLAN INQUIRIES

1. This Circular introduces a revised Code of Practice for Local Plan Inquiries in Scotland. The new Code replaces that issued under cover of Circular No 7/1985, which is cancelled.

### **Citizen's charter**

2. Ten copies of the Code are enclosed with this Circular (for Chief Executives only). In accordance with the principles of the Citizen's Charter, the Code is intended to be a user-friendly guide through the local plan inquiry process for businesses and individual members of the public. The Secretary of State hopes that all planning authorities and other parties concerned with local plan inquiries will follow the new Code to help ensure that the process operates as efficiently and effectively as possible.

3. I should therefore be grateful if authorities would make copies of it freely available to interested bodies and members of the public whenever and wherever a Local Plan is deposited for inspection in accordance with Section 10(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1972.

### **Code of practice**

4. The new Code takes account of changes in administrative practice which have taken place over the past 10 years. It has been prepared in consultation with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), authorities themselves and a number of other interested organisations. It should be read in conjunction with the Structure and Local Plans (Scotland) Regulations 1983, Planning Advice Note 49 "Local Planning" and the Local Plan Service Standards Document issued under cover of Circular 1/1996.

5. The Code aims to provide fuller detail than before on the whole process of preparing for local plan inquiries for new or updated Local Plans. In particular, the Code stresses the benefits of encouraging early and full public participation in the local plan process and sets out good practice guidance on the arrangements for pre-inquiry meetings and exchange of documents and for the inquiry itself, and

discusses reporting and other arrangements following the inquiry. A revised Model Form of Objection to local plan proposals is included as an Appendix to the Code. Again, authorities are asked to make copies of such forms freely available at places where plans are deposited for inspection.

### **Comments**

6. The opportunity will be taken to adjust the advice in the Code based on experience gained in the processing of local plans. The Secretary of State would therefore welcome comments from planning authorities and others with an interest in local planning on the possible future development of this Code.

### **Enquiries**

7. Enquiries about the operation of the Code, particularly in relation to specific inquiries, should be addressed to Mr Iain MacLeod, The Scottish Office Inquiry Reporters Unit, Room 402, 2 Greenside Lane, Edinburgh, EH1 3AG (Telephone 0131-244-5649). General enquiries about the content of this Circular and comments on the further development of the Code should be addressed to Mr Keith Main, Room 2-H32, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ (Telephone 0131-244-7062). Further copies of the Code and a list of planning Circulars may be obtained from Miss Kelly Wood at this address (Telephone 0131-244-7066).

Yours faithfully

M T Affolter

Code of Practice for Local Plan Inquiries  
September 1996