

Our Ref: MJH/EMC/D24.01

31st August 2011

J Clarke Esq.,
LDF Programme Manager
Knowsley Council
P O Box 26
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By Email

Dear Mr Clarke

**Re: Consultation on Knowsley's Local Development Framework
Core Strategy Preferred Options Report
Response by The Earl of Derby's Knowsley Estate**

1. The Knowsley Estate is broadly supportive of the proposals within the Preferred Options Report of June 2011.

2. Spatial Strategy for Knowsley

We support the preferred Option CS1, in particular the inclusion within the policy of Option C "Sustainable Urban Extensions".

3. Housing Supply, Delivery & Distribution

We support the preferred Option CS3, in particular the indicative distribution of new housing.

4. Economy & Employment

We support the preferred Option CS4, in particular the reference to the support of the diversification of the rural economy and of appropriate development of tourism facilities.

5. Green Belts

We support the preferred Option CS5, in particular with regards to the "Reserved" locations and "Safeguarded locations". We comment on individual sites below.

6. Knowsley Safari Park

Policy Progress 4 on page 68 states "Knowsley Safari Park should be permitted to continue to evolve and develop as a tourist attraction". We support this statement. The Safari Park sits

within the green belt and this raises planning application issues in response to its evolution and development as a tourist attraction. Paragraph 5.29 states “there is potential for a more detailed policy focus as part of a Site Allocations and Development Policies DPD” in respect of the Safari Park. We consider it important that the Safari Park has the flexibility to evolve to meet changing tourism demands and we would value working with Knowsley Council to develop appropriate policies.

7. “Reserved” Tier 1 Locations: No. 3 – Land at Knowsley Lane

We strongly support the allocation of this land within the Reserved Tier 1 Locations. We note this site is within the green belt and we make the following observations in respect thereof:-

- (a) The site is bounded on the north by the motorway and this very effectively eliminates any impact on Knowsley Park that the development of the site might have.
- (b) The land has for many years been used almost entirely for equine use and therefore the development of the land will have minimal effect on food production.
- (c) A survey of land quality will be undertaken and provided to the Council.

8. “Reserved” Tier 2 Locations: No. 2 – Land to the East of Knowsley Industrial Park

We note that the land lies within the green belt and we comment as follows:-

- (a) The land is at an adequate distance from Knowsley Park so that its development will not impact on the historic setting of the Park.
- (b) Part of the land is in agricultural production, but it is farmed on a contract farming basis as a small part of a larger business. The removal of the land from that business will have no significant effect on the viability of the business.

9. “Safeguarded” Locations: No. 10 – Land at Knowsley Village

We note that the land lies within the green belt and we comment as follows:-

- (a) The land adjoins the boundary wall of Knowsley Park, but the majority of the boundary is screened by belts of mature trees, so that the visual impact into and out of the Park will be moderated. The use to be allocated to the land within the site, where it adjoins the Park wall, needs to be appropriate to enhance the separation of any development from the historic Park.

The part of the site at Home Farm Road adjoins the section of the Park wall that has been rebuilt in block work rather than the traditional attractive sandstone.

- (b) The fields adjoining Home Farm Road are subject to trespass and this limits the potential stocking and cropping of the land. It is not possible to keep livestock on the land and any straw or hay produced from the land needs to be removed speedily before it is damaged. The production from this land is a small proportion of the total output of the farm and the removal of the land from the farm holding would not have a significant impact on its profitability.
- (c) A survey of the land quality will be undertaken and the results provided to Knowsley Council.
- (d) The site is classified as a site of biological importance. We understand that this only relates to the occasional use of the land by geese for grazing or as a buffer to the parkland

itself which is a site of biological importance. We believe the site has very little significance in relation to supporting bio-diversity and we will ask the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service to justify the classification as a site of biological importance. The results of this enquiry will be provided to the Council.

We would be pleased to discuss our representations with the officers of Knowsley Council.

Yours sincerely

M J Harker