

INSPECTOR'S NOTE TO KNOWSLEY COUNCIL

Procedural matters following representations on Modifications to KLPCS

The Inspector has read the representations submitted to the Proposed Modifications to the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy. Before deciding the exact format of the remainder of the examination, the Inspector asks the Council for any comments on the procedural matters below, and for its specific response to the questions in items 1, 2, and 7.

1. There is substantial concern about the nature of previous consultation stages, with many new representors saying that this is the first they have heard about the areas of Green Belt to be released for development. I have already asked the Council for a note on the nature and extent of any differences in the consultation process between this occasion and previous stages (particularly the Submission consultation stage); in light of the concerns expressed, please would the Council include the following information in this note:
 - a) What documents were distributed directly to residents at (i) Submission consultation stage and (ii) the current consultation on Modifications (please supply a copy of the documents in each case);
 - b) How, and to whom (in general terms), were the above documents distributed;
 - c) Is the Council confident that distribution was conducted as intended at these two stages (ie is there any firm evidence that persons who should have received documents did not receive them, as some respondents have claimed). At the start of the hearings the Council acknowledged problems of delivery to properties close to the Cronton Colliery/south of M62 site – are there other locations where the Council is aware of non-delivery?
 - d) In the Council's view, what is the reason for the significantly greater response this time?
 - e) Does the Council still believe that the consultation at previous stages (particularly the Submission stage) met statutory requirements and the Council's own procedures (ie revisiting Questions 1.2 and 1.3 of Matter 1, as discussed at the hearing on 5.11.13). If not, what action (if any) does the Council propose to take to remedy this matter?
2. How does the Council intend to consider the representations received and to decide whether or not to make further modifications in light of the responses (in particular, will Members be involved and if so, how)? How long will this process take?
3. The Council has agreed that an additional hearing session is desirable. Given the extent of objection to the safeguarded site at Knowsley Village (KGB6), and the fact that very little local objection to this proposal was aired at the previous hearings, this will be one of the items for discussion. I think it will also be necessary to revisit the consultation process (item 1 above). Depending on the Council's response to item 1, it may also be

necessary to briefly revisit other Green Belt sites that have attracted substantial additional representations – if this is necessary, my approach will be to hear from representors who did not participate at the earlier stages.

4. One issue that is frequently mentioned in the representations is the Ministerial statement(s) in October concerning Green Belt protection. Clearly this (together with the associated PPG revision) is a new matter that warrants discussion with all participants. At the additional hearing session I will be asking the Council for its comments on the statement and PPG revision, and whether or not it proposes to further modify the plan in response to the Ministers' views and/or the representations.
5. Some representors have raised specific questions about the wording of certain modifications including Highways Agency (SUE 2 and 2a-2c), Junction Property Ltd (SUE 2), Sport England (SUE 2, 2a, 2c), Orbit Investments (CS 11, CS 22), English Heritage (CS 20), Coal Authority (Allocation Profiles). Had there been no need for a further hearing session I would have dealt with these matters based on the written comments. However, as hearings are to be held it seems sensible to have a brief discussion on whether further adjustments are necessary to the wording of modifications.
6. One other potential matter for discussion is the 2012-based household forecasts from DCLG, which were expected to be published in Autumn 2014 but are still awaited. If these are released prior to the hearing, the implications will have to be addressed.
7. Other than the items above, does the Council consider (i) that there are any other new matters raised in the representations that need to be discussed, and (ii) that it necessary or desirable to re-open the discussion on any other matters previously debated?

Martin Pike
INSPECTOR

18 December 2014