

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION

INSPECTOR'S NOTE FOLLOWING JUNE 2015 HEARINGS

1. In January 2014 I issued 'interim findings' on key soundness issues for the Submission Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy (KLPCS) following examination hearings held in November 2013 (document EX26). In response to these findings, the Council made modifications to the KLPCS which were discussed at hearings in July 2014. In August 2014 I issued 'second interim findings' on the main changes since November 2013 in which I concluded that, subject to minor revisions, the modified Plan is sound (document EX34).
2. Public consultation on all Proposed Modifications to the Submission KLPCS was undertaken in late 2014. Because this attracted a much greater response than at the previous stages of plan preparation, the examination hearings were reconvened on 2-4 June 2015 to address certain matters (see document EX39).
3. The Council's position is that no further changes to the Proposed Modifications version of the KLPCS are necessary and that the modified Plan remains sound. I have given detailed consideration to the representations on the Proposed Modifications, to the statements submitted by the parties prior to the June 2015 hearings, and to the evidence given at the hearing sessions. I have also taken into account the changes in national guidance and the KLPCS evidence base.
4. Subject to minor revisions to clarify that the safeguarded land at Knowsley Village is not allocated for development at the present time, I agree with the Council that no further modifications to the Plan are required. I acknowledge the substantial local opposition to the development of Green Belt land, in particular, but I believe this is an essential part of the Plan's strategy and accords with national policy. The detailed reasoning for this and all other conclusions will be set out in my report to the Council.
5. I now have all the information I need to complete my report to the Council. Therefore no further information or evidence from any of the examination participants will normally be accepted. Following the standard processes of internal quality assurance and fact checking by the Council (as set out in "Examining Local Plans: Procedural Practice", The Planning Inspectorate, December 2013), I aim to send my final report to the Council by 10 August 2015.

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6. As I stated at the close of the hearing on 4 June, I thank all participants for their contributions to this lengthy and challenging examination. In addition my thanks go to the Programme Officer, Paul Morris, for the helpful and professional manner in which he has carried out the administration of the examination.

Martin Pike

Inspector
19 June 2015