

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: RE-CONVENED EXAMINATION

MATTER 2 : COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO INSPECTOR'S INTERIM FINDINGS

WRITTEN STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF UNITED UTILITIES

REPRESENTOR NO.: 106/127

SHORT TERM LAND SUPPLY AND RELEASE OF GREEN BELT SITES

Issue:

2.1 Is the designation of 'reserve locations' as Sustainable Urban Extensions and the omission of a phased approach to their release (new policy SUE 1) justified by evidence?

It is generally recognised that the shortfall in the 'deliverable' supply of housing sites in Knowsley needs to be addressed in order to establish a sound Local Plan. The single realistic option available to address this issue is the early release of sites from the Green Belt.

Housing needs to be delivered on the Green Belt sites before 2018. Planning policy needs to be framed in a way which will accommodate this.

The rate of delivery of housing on the range of Green Belt sites will be a function of landowner agreements, provision of the necessary infrastructure (on-site and off-site) and market sentiment. The start of development on the different Green Belt sites will be staggered. The large sites where masterplanning and considerable infrastructure is needed will be subject to longer lead in times. On the smaller sites activity is likely to be at a faster pace.

The trajectory for delivery of housing on the Green Belt sites (Page 254 of the Technical Report on Sustainable Urban Extensions) shows that almost all sites will yield housing towards the end of the five year period. Some sites could become active before 2017/18 but there could be delay on others. For this key reason the Council is correct in proposing a policy with no phasing mechanism for Green Belt site development. Given the matters to be addressed at the Green Belt sites, a phased approach (effectively delaying the release of a number of the sites) would run the significant risk of not bringing forward sufficient housing on time to meet the requirement for a five year deliverable housing land supply.

The land at Carr Lane in Prescott is one of the smaller Green Belt sites. It could yield housing in the next five years and it is anticipated that the start of development will be ahead of projected completions in the aforesaid housing trajectory. This is important in the context of the South Prescott Principal Regeneration Area which needs the momentum generated by new investment.

2.2 Does the approach to Sustainable Urban Extensions adequately address concerns about the availability of a five year housing land supply?

The proposed approach takes into account the long lead times for strategic sites. The early release of these strategic sites in particular will give the confidence and certainty of starting the complex process of bringing forward development. If there are further delays in the allocation of Green Belt sites then there is little prospect that there will be a housing yield of any significance from these sites that will address the current shortfalls in the deliverable housing land supply.

2.4 Are the criteria to be applied to development of Sustainable Urban Extensions (new Policy SUE 2) justified and effective?

The criteria outlined in Policy SUE 2 are appropriate and proportionate and will relate, to varying degrees, to the range of Sustainable Urban Extension Sites.