

St. Helens Council

Matter 4

ID Reference 487

Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy Examination

Reconvened Examination Hearings June 2015

Matter 4: Response to Consultation on Main Modifications

Statement by St. Helens Council

Background

This statement to the Examination in Public (EiP) reflects a representation previously made by St. Helens Council on the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy – Proposed Modifications in November 2014. Since the Proposed Modifications consultation in November 2014 St. Helens Council has been engaged in discussions with Knowsley Council seeking to address the issues regarding highways and education raised in the representation.

Issue 4.4: Are further adjustments to the wording of the following policies necessary ... b) SUE 2a-2C?

St. Helens Council is broadly in support of the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy and understands that Knowsley cannot meet all of its housing need in the urban area based upon its identified housing need, and therefore Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) are required. However the proposed modifications to the Local Plan: Core Strategy, which seek to allocate SUEs as specific land allocations rather than strategic locations, as originally proposed in the Submission version of the Local Plan: Core Strategy, have caused concern. The earlier release of such sites before all the issues are fully examined and resolved is of concern. These issues have been deferred to a Supplementary Planning Document but the timescale of that is beyond the adoption of the Core Strategy. The Council is particularly concerned about the potential adverse impacts the South Whiston and Land South of M62 SUE could have on infrastructure within St. Helens Borough, given the close proximity of the SUE, which runs along the south western boundary of St. Helens.

Education

Policy SUE 2c, part 2d, requires the need for development proposals for the South of Whiston and Land South of M62 SUE to consider the requirement for a primary school of an appropriate scale to meet the needs arising from the SUE and St. Helens Council supports this policy requirement. However, the Council is concerned that given the close proximity of the SUE to St. Helens, and the popularity of schools in St. Helens in that locality, that it will also place significant pressure on secondary school places within St. Helens and in particular at Rainhill High School. The Council is concerned that children from St. Helens who live in the catchment area for Rainhill High School will be displaced, which could have capacity implications for other secondary schools within the Borough.

St. Helens Council would therefore propose the following changes to SUE 2c, part 2d:

“Key infrastructure and services, including consideration of requirements for **a new local retail centre provision, and a primary school of appropriate scale to meet needs arising from the site, and a contribution toward secondary school provision both within Knowsley and St. Helens** and/or appropriate financial contributions to meet these needs off-site.”

Highways

Policy SUE 2c, part 2a, requires the need for development proposals for the South of Whiston and Land South of M62 SUE to consider the need for traffic mitigation measures to

address the impact of the development on traffic generation in the wider area and the Council supports this requirement. The Council considers that because of the location of the SUE there will be an impact on the St Helens road network, particularly Blundells Lane, Mill Lane/Old Lane and A57 Warrington Road, from future residents and employees who will work or live in St Helens and for those wanting to use the facilities in St Helens, including schools. The Council is concerned that the traffic generated by the SUE is being underestimated and that the actual impact of the development will be greater than currently predicted.

While St. Helens Council does not object to the South Whiston and Land South of M62 SUE in principle, we would wish to ensure that all potential impacts of the SUE on local residents within St. Helens have been considered and that policy requirements for the detailed assessment and mitigation of any adverse impacts on infrastructure provision within St. Helens are included within the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy. To ensure that these policy requirements are clear, St. Helens Council would like to suggest a minor amendment to the supporting text of Policy SUE 2c: South of Whiston and Land South of M62. The following wording should be inserted after the last sentence of paragraph 6A.28 in the supporting text of Policy SUE 2c: South of Whiston and Land South of M62:

“Given the proximity of the South Whiston and Land South of M62 SUE to St. Helens Borough, an assessment of the impacts of development on highways and education infrastructure capacity within St. Helens Borough should be undertaken in consultation with St Helens Council as part of the masterplanning work. Where any adverse impacts are identified, mitigation measures within St. Helens Borough may be considered necessary.”