

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF RAINHILL CIVIC SOCIETY

In response to question 2(8), you will recall at the hearing in November last that I outlined how Huyton UDC breached the Merseyside Green Belt at Lickers Lane in the late sixties through the offices of the then Prime Minister Harold Wilson. This was a political not a planning decision! To extend this anomaly to the M62 would only increase the wrong, and two wrongs don't make a right!

The Government in the shape of Eric Pickles, the Minister for Communities and Local Government has recently expressed its preference for the development of Brownfield sites rather than the Green Belt, and has promised financial incentives to encourage this, because we all know developers would rather use virgin land than have the complication of formerly used sites.

In this respect, we, at Stockbridge Village, have identified sites for approximately 500 dwellings, which the Council chose to ignore at the previous hearing. We also have five multi storey blocks of flats (450 in total, of which two thirds, ie. 300, are two bedroomed). These were built by Liverpool in the late sixties to Parker Morris standards, and are under £100 per week including rent and service charge. However, as a result of the under occupation reduction we have over 40 vacancies. We have carried out an extensive advertising campaign, including an open day to show a model flat, so this somewhat explodes the myth of a housing shortage in this part of the country.

The fundamental flaw with the Council's strategy is the quality of its secondary education or rather lack of it, being bottom of the national table. Until this is drastically improved "professionals" will not want to live and have their children educated in the Borough.

For all of the above and previously stated reasons, we consider the proposed development of the site south of Lickers Lane to the M62 to be inappropriate, unnecessary and contrary to the best planning principles and practise. It is essential to preserve the Green Belt and only consider development therein when all the Brownfield sites have been developed.