

THISTLEBERRY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Response to Inspector's Questions re Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan

MATTER 3 - GREEN BELT

3.1 Not clearly identified in the Plan. Is it still a policy to replace removed tracts from the Green Belt with land elsewhere?

3.2 Given the shortage of brownfield sites in the borough the suggested and begun joint plan with Stoke-on-Trent made some sense. This was shelved at great expense which might also extend to the Green Belt and countryside.

No account has been made in the current Draft Plan of the number of empty properties in the borough. This amounted to 1800 at one point. This would amount to three large housing estates.

What is meant by underutilised land? Some car parks have been earmarked for housing development - not all of them underused.

If the NBC had liaised with other LAs re 'exchanges' of brown field sites for use of green sites/green belt/countryside, this might have resolved the situation. It might entail boundary changes, however, which are not political but practical. NBC seems keen to go it alone.

Re density of development - does this depend on need and are there strict guidelines for compliance? Density could be differentially interpreted. It would also depend on how accurate the housing need assessment and demand is.

3.3 Don't know but perhaps we should. The term 'exceptional' can be differentially interpreted. It also depends on whether or not it is confused and collapsed into the housing market needs/assessment. Such terms can be differentially interpreted by some LPAs. The two are very different and should not be confused.

3.4 Not sure. Green Belt land and countryside are highly desired by developers so they could be used as inducements, even if the development is not appropriate or necessary. It is important that development does not take place on agricultural land which although it might be under used at the moment, might need to be brought into commission in the future. Grey land is also an attractive addition although this too can be misinterpreted and misapplied, and farmers might be only too happy to oblige.

3.5 Don't know. This is up to the Inspector to adjudicate.

3.6 Don't know but perhaps we should.

3.7 Probably not. It is an easy target for both developers and LAs.

3.8 Don't know. This is for the Inspector to decide

3.9 Very. See above.

3.10 Some of the land within the borough sequestered and compulsorily purchased by the HS2 project could be regarded now as grey land amounting to hundreds of acres in one area. There are some farmers and landowners who might also 'create' 'grey land' in anticipation.

3.11 Some LAs will comply others will not, some will not even understand the rules or interpret them correctly. Some will deliberately misinterpret them. Such rules might need to be imposed stringently.

Dr A Drakakis-Smith

Chair

TRA 29 April 2025