

Hearing Statement – Matter 6 (Site TK27: Land off Coppice Road, Kidsgrove)

For The Strategic Land Group Ltd | 17-426

Newcastle Under Lyme Local Plan 2020-2040 examination



Project: 17-426
Hearing: Matter 6 (Site TK27: Land off Coppice Road, Kidsgrove)
Client: The Strategic Land Group Ltd
Date: 30 April 2025

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Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	SLG response to the Inspectors' questions	2

Appendices

EP1. Statement of Common Ground (SLG and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council)



1. Introduction

- 1.1 Emery Planning is instructed by The Strategic Land Group Ltd (hereafter referred to as “SLG”) to attend the examination of the Newcastle Under Lyme Local Plan 2020-2040. SLG is promoting draft allocation TK27: Land off Coppice Road, Kidsgrove.
- 1.2 This hearing statement sets out our response to the Inspector’s Matters, Issues and Questions in relation to Matter 6 – Housing Allocations. It should be read in conjunction with our detailed representations to the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft of the plan and our other Hearing Statements submitted to the examination.
- 1.3 Question 6.3 sets out questions in relation to each of the proposed allocations in the plan. This statement addresses question 6.3 in relation to Site TK27: Land off Coppice Road, Kidsgrove.
- 1.4 Our response to question 6.3 should also be read alongside the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) that has been agreed between SLG and the Council. A copy of the signed SoCG is provided at Appendix **EP1**. All references to ‘the SoCG’ within this statement are references to that document.



2. SLG response to the Inspectors' questions

Issue 6 - Are the proposed housing allocations justified, effective, developable, deliverable, in line with national policy and otherwise soundly based?

Q6.1 Do the sites allocated for residential development provide an appropriate range of sites in terms of their type and size?

- 2.1 Whilst this is primarily a matter for the Council, the range and distribution of sites allocated would appear to indicate that an appropriate range of dwellings would be delivered across the borough.

Q6.2 Are the requirements of Policy SA1 sound? are there any omissions from the policy? Is it consistent with national policy?

- 2.2 We generally support Policy SA1 which provides a series of general requirements for the allocated sites. However, we set out a number of proposed modifications to the policy below, with reference to the sub-headings in Table 6 of the plan.

Master Plans

- 2.3 Whilst the policy does not specify the mechanism for master plans, we would question whether masterplans are needed on all sites. This is particularly important for smaller sites without significant on-site infrastructure requirements (for example our client's site TK27, which is allocated for 90 dwellings). In such cases requiring a masterplan would unnecessarily delay delivery, when it may well be appropriate to move straight to a full application. As a minimum, we consider that Table 6 should be clear that an appropriate mechanism for approving master plans can be through the planning application process.

Green Belt Compensatory Measures / Green Belt Boundaries

- 2.4 This section of Table 6 largely reflects the guidance in paragraphs 64-002 and 64-003 of the PPG. However, the plan omits the section at paragraph 64-003 which states that:

“Consideration will need to be given to:

- land ownership, in relation to both land that is proposed to be released for development and that which may be most suitable for compensatory improvements for which contributions may be sought;



- the scope of works that would be needed to implement the identified improvements, such as new public rights of way, land remediation, natural capital enhancement or habitat creation and enhancement, and their implications for deliverability;”

2.5 The guidance is clear that land ownership and deliverability constraints in relation to compensatory improvements are not intended to prejudice the delivery of allocated sites. We therefore consider that, for the avoidance of doubt, the section in Table 6 should be revised to fully reflect the guidance in the PPG.

Site TK27: Land off Coppice Road, Kidsgrove

Q6.3 Are the sites allocated for housing sound, and in particular for each of the sites listed below:

a) Have the site constraints been appropriately taken into account in the allocation of the site?

2.6 Yes. We refer to the SoCG between SLG and the Council, which is provided at Appendix **EP1**. We also refer to our representations to the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft which address the suitability of the site for development in detail. A summary is provided below.

Green Belt considerations

2.7 In relation to Green Belt matters, Section 8 of the SoCG identifies that the following matters are agreed between SLG and the Council:

- Green Belt:
 - The Site does not make a strong overall contribution to Green Belt purposes
 - The release of the site would not harm the overall function and integrity of the Green Belt

2.8 The site is highly accessible by public transport with four bus services an hour passing the site on weekdays. These services connect the site to the centres of both Hanley and Kidsgrove. The bus services also provide access to Kidsgrove train station, which benefits from direct services to a range of locations including Stoke, Crewe, Manchester Piccadilly and London Euston. Therefore, in accordance with paragraph 147 of the Framework, the site is well served by public transport and should be given first consideration for release from the Green Belt.



2.9 In the Green Belt Assessment Part 1 (ED008c) undertaken by consultants Arup, the site was assessed as part of a larger tract of land to the west of Kidsgrove (parcel 36). It was considered to make a 'moderate contribution' to the Green Belt purposes. This means:

"on the whole the parcel contributes to a few of the elements of the Green Belt purpose however does not fulfil all elements".

2.10 The site is assessed individually in the Green Belt Assessment Part 2 (ED008b) (parcel TK27). The assessment concludes as follows:

"The site makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. Development of the site would not represent unrestricted sprawl, it would not result in neighbouring towns merging and it would not impact upon the setting or character of the historic town of Talke. Development would entail a small incursion into undeveloped countryside relative to the size of Talke. Overall, the removal of the site from the Green Belt will not harm the overall function and integrity of the Green Belt. A new recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundary would be created consisting of Merelake Road to the south and through strengthening the existing western boundary. It is recommended that if the site is taken forward the accompanying policy should recognise this." (our emphasis)

2.11 The Green Belt Assessment Part 4 (ED008) retains this assessment. Therefore, the conclusions of the Green Belt Assessment are:

- The site does not make a 'significant contribution' to any of the Green Belt purposes.
- The site makes a 'moderate contribution' to the Green Belt purposes overall.
- The release of the site would not harm the overall function and integrity of the Green Belt.
- The site should be considered for release.

2.12 Notwithstanding these conclusions, we consider that the site makes a 'weak contribution' to the Green Belt purposes. Indeed, the Council's Green Belt assessment does not indicate that the site makes anything more than a weak contribution against any of the Green Belt purposes. The site is surrounded on 3 sides by permanent built development in the form of road infrastructure and residential development, and natural screening in the form of hedgerows and trees, as well as the marked change in topography beyond the western boundary, provides defensible boundaries and a strong sense of containment. This could be supplemented through a comprehensive landscaping scheme.

2.13 As part of our discussions with the Council in 2018, the Council sought additional analysis of the western boundary of the site, to demonstrate the strength of the boundary following development. This additional information was provided through our representations to the Issues and Strategic Options consultation, and is summarised at pages 10 and 25 Development Prospectus which was submitted with our



representations to the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft. The information, which includes photographs and an illustrative cross-section, demonstrates that a robust, defensible boundary already exists and can be enhanced. Appendix F of the Green Belt Assessment Part 4 endorses this conclusion, stating in relation to parcel TK27:

“A new recognisable and permanent Green Belt boundary would be created consisting of Merelake Road to the south and through strengthening the existing western boundary.”

- 2.14 Therefore, the evidence base in relation to the Green Belt provides clear justification to release the site from the Green Belt to meet identified housing needs.

Technical considerations

- 2.15 A range of technical assessments have been undertaken to support the proposed allocation of the site. These are summarised in paragraphs 5.21 to 5.37 of our representations to the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft. The technical assessments were also used to inform the concept masterplan set out in the Development Prospectus which was provided with our Regulation 19 representations.
- 2.16 Section 8 of the SoCG identifies that the following matters are agreed between SLG and the Council:
- The site comprises an accessible location and a safe and suitable access can be achieved
 - There are no known ecological reasons why the site should not be developed
 - The site is greenfield and is not known to be subject to any contamination that would preclude development. Historic mine workings would not be a constraint to development.
 - The site is not of high landscape sensitivity, and there are no landscape or visual impact reasons why the site should not be developed.
 - A heritage impact assessment will be submitted with a planning application. There are no heritage reasons why the site should not be allocated.
 - The site comprises Grade 3b agricultural land and is not ‘best and most versatile’.
- 2.17 As set out at paragraph 7.1 of the SoCG, detailed technical assessments (e.g., Transport Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment, Heritage Impact Assessment, Ecological Assessment) will be required to support any future planning application.
- 2.18 To conclude, constraints have been appropriately considered in the allocation of the site. There are no significant constraints which indicate that the site should not be allocated. The site is therefore suitable for development and the allocation is justified.



b) Are the various requirements set out in the policy clear, justified and effective?

- 2.19 Generally, the criteria within the allocation policy are considered to be proportionate and reasonable in the context of the allocation. However, we propose the following amendments:

Criterion 8

- 2.20 Criterion 8 states:

“Improvements required at Coppice Road / Merelake Road / Coal Pit Lane junction for highway safety reasons. Offsite footway improvements required on the site frontage and from the site to local school, bus stops and shops”

- 2.21 We consider that this criterion is not justified, as it is yet to be determined (such that it is specified as a fixed requirement by policy) that improvements will be required at Coppice Road / Merelake Road / Coal Pit Lane. The need for such improvement is not specified within the Strategic Transport Assessment (ED011).
- 2.22 Although SLG are content to deliver highways improvements should they be required, the need for any off-site improvements to any nearby junctions is clearly a matter that will need to be considered through the Transport Assessment, prepared in consultation with the Local Highways Authority. A Transport Assessment is already required under Policies SA1 and IN2.
- 2.23 Therefore, we proposed that the criterion should be replaced with the following text, to make clear that the issue is to be considered through the Transport Assessment:

An assessment of the need for off-site highway improvements, including at the Coppice Road / Merelake Road / Coal Pit Lane junction, and offsite footway improvements.

Criterion 9

- 2.24 Criterion 9 requires financial contributions to improvements in the capacity of local schools and health facilities. We do not object to the principle of potentially providing such contributions, but given the fluid nature of school and health facility capacity, and to ensure any such contribution is lawful, the need for such contributions will need to be assessed at the planning application stage. We also note that the need for education contributions for Site TK27 is not identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (CD16).
- 2.25 We therefore consider that the policy should be amended as follows:

Consideration of the need for proportionate financial ~~Financial~~ contributions to improvements in the capacity of local schools and health facilities.



Criterion 10

- 2.26 Criterion 10 requires financial contributions to improvements to Talke Signals (A34 Newcastle Rd / Congleton Rd / Coalpit Hill). We recognise that this is identified as a potential plan-wide mitigation measure within the Strategic Transport Assessment (ED011, see section 8.6.1.1). Nevertheless, the need for improvements and the details of any scheme will still need to be determined through Transport Assessments. Any contributions will also need to be made on a proportionate basis, noting that there are several planned developments in Talke which would likely impact upon this junction to a greater degree than Site TK27. Certainly, on an individual basis site TK27 is unlikely to have any material impact on this junction. Therefore, to ensure any such contribution is lawful, the degree to which the proposal impacts upon the junction should be considered through the Transport Assessment.
- 2.27 We therefore propose that criterion 10 is amended as follows:

Consideration of the need for proportionate financial ~~Financial~~ to improvements to Talke Signals (A34 Newcastle Rd / Congleton Rd / Coalpit Hill).

c) Have the indicative yield, development mix and viability considerations been adequately addressed?

- 2.28 Policy TK27 states that the site is allocated for 90 dwellings. The enclosed Development Prospectus presents a concept masterplan, which demonstrates one way in which the site could deliver for approximately 90 dwellings in a high-quality scheme which reflects urban design best practice and considering all relevant technical matters, including access, drainage, services and green and blue infrastructure (as discussed above). Therefore, the proposed quantum of development is realistic based on the available evidence.

d) Is there robust evidence that the assumptions regarding the infrastructure required for the development are realistic and that it will be deliverable?

- 2.29 The site comprises a development of 90 dwellings. The infrastructure requirements for such a development are not considered to be significant and there would not be a need for any major infrastructure, such as a new school or new health facilities, to be provided on-site.
- 2.30 The Council has prepared a comprehensive Infrastructure Delivery Plan (CD16) which assesses local infrastructure provision and the potential need for infrastructure requirements taking account of the level of development proposed in the plan. In relation to Site TK27, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the potential need for Section 106 contributions towards highways infrastructure, health (primary care), open space (where not provided on site) and community facilities. The package of Section 106



contributions would be determined at the application stage, having regard to the latest evidence and in consultation with infrastructure providers.

- 2.31 In relation to utilities, SLG has undertaken searches for the main utility providers. These have confirmed that all main services are available, and that connections can be made to the site.

e) Is there evidence that the development of the allocation is viable and developable during the plan period?

- 2.32 Deliverability is addressed in Section 5 of the Statement of Common Ground between SLG and the Council. A delivery trajectory is provided in Section 6. In summary:

- There are no physical, technical or legal/ownership constraints to development, and the site could come forward immediately for development.
- SLG is an experienced land promoter with an established track record of delivering sites for residential development. It would be SLG's intention to sell the site to developer at the earliest opportunity. Indeed, SLG has in the recent past secured planning permission for 350 new homes on a greenfield site in Stoke-on-Trent, which is currently being developed by both Persimmon and Bellway (thereby maximising the delivery rate).
- The Promoter has already completed much of the technical work required to support a planning application, and it is their intention to submit a planning application within 3 months of the Local Plan being adopted, and to sell the site to a developer at the earliest opportunity thereafter.

- 2.33 The site will therefore deliver in full during the plan period, and it would also contribute to the deliverable 5-year supply in the short term. The agreed delivery trajectory assumes that all 90 dwellings will be delivered in the first 5 years.

f) Are there any omissions in the policy, and is it sufficiently flexible? Where applicable, are the main modifications suggested to the Policy necessary to make the Plan sound?

- 2.34 We have addressed our comments on the allocation policy in our response to question 6.3(c) above.

Word count: 2,512



EP1



**Statement of Common Ground between Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Paul Smith
Strategic Land Group, represented by Emery Planning**

Regarding Site Allocation: TK27 - Land off Coppice Road, Talke

Newcastle-Under-Lyme Local Plan (2020-2040)

1. Parties Involved

- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council (NULBC)
- Paul Smith of the Strategic Land Group, represented by Emery Planning

2. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council (The Council) and Paul Smith of the Strategic Land Group (The Promoter) in relation to the proposed allocation in the Local Plan. This statement identifies areas of common ground between parties in respect of the allocation of the site in the Local Plan.

3. Site Details

- 3.1 Site Name: Land off Coppice Road, Talke
- 3.2 Site Address: Land off Coppice Road, Talke, Newcastle-under-Lyme
- 3.3 Site Allocation Reference: TK27
- 3.4 Site Area: 2.82 hectares.
- 3.5 Site Location Plan: See Figure 1 below.
- 3.6 Proposed development - The Site is allocated for residential development in the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Final Draft Local Plan 2020-2040, comprising approximately 90 dwellings.

Figure 1: Site Boundary Plan for Land off Coppice Road, Talke



4. Key Policy Requirements

- 4.1 The development of the site will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of Policy TK27 and other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

5. Site Availability and Deliverability

- 5.1 The Promoter confirms that the allocated site will be made available for development within the Plan period (2020-2040).
- 5.2 The Promoter confirms that there are no known legal or ownership impediments to development on the allocated site that would prevent delivery within the plan period.
- 5.3 The Promoter considers that the proposed development is deliverable, having regard to currently identified site-specific constraints, policy requirements, and the findings of the Council's evidence base. The Promoter will work with the Council and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the necessary access, utilities and infrastructure are delivered in a timely manner to support the phasing of development.
- 5.4 The Promoter confirms that they will continue to work collaboratively with the Council, statutory consultees, and the local community to ensure that the development is delivered in a timely and efficient manner.
- 5.5 The Promoter is an experienced land promoter with an established track record of delivering sites for residential development. The Promoter has already completed much of the technical work required to support a planning application, and it is their intention to submit a planning application within 3 months of the Local Plan being adopted, and to sell the site to a developer at the earliest opportunity thereafter.

6. Delivery Trajectory

- 6.1 The Promoter has provided an indicative trajectory for the delivery of development on the allocated site, as set out below and based on current assumptions and information.
- 6.2 The anticipated delivery trajectory for the proposed development is as follows:

Site Ref and Location	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/2030	2030-2035	2035-2040	Total
TK27	0	0	15	30	30	15	0	0	90

- 6.3 It is acknowledged that the delivery trajectory is indicative and may be subject to change, depending on factors such as detailed site investigations, market conditions, and the timing of planning approvals.

7. Further Assessments

- 7.1 It is agreed that detailed technical assessments (e.g., Transport Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment, Heritage Impact Assessment, Ecological Assessment) will be required to support any future planning application for the Site. These assessments will be carried out in accordance with relevant legislation, national policy and guidance, and best practice.

8. Areas of Agreement

- 8.1 The Council and the Promoter agree on the following matters:
 - The principle of developing the Site for residential development in accordance with the allocation in the emerging Local Plan.
 - The site boundaries as defined on Figure 1.
 - The proposed development is in accordance with the broad principles of relevant policies of the Local Plan and other material considerations subject to detailed consideration through a planning application.
 - The Site is available and deliverable within the Plan period.
 - The specific requirements of policy TK27 are appropriate and justified.
 - The Site does not make a strong overall contribution to Green Belt purposes
 - The release of the site would not harm the overall function and integrity of the Green Belt
 - The site comprises an accessible location and a safe and suitable access can be achieved
 - There are no known ecological reasons why the site should not be developed
 - The site is greenfield and is not known to be subject to any contamination that would preclude development. Historic mine workings are unlikely to be a constraint to development.
 - The site is not of high landscape sensitivity, and there are no landscape or visual impact reasons why the site should not be developed.
 - A heritage impact assessment will be submitted with a planning application. The site promotor considers that there is sufficiently distant from designated heritage assets to conclude that the development of the site would not impact upon their setting. There are no heritage reasons why the site should not be allocated.

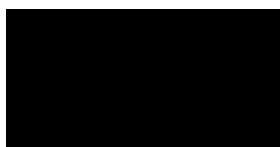
- The site comprises Grade 3b agricultural land and is not 'best and most versatile'.

9. Areas of Disagreement

- 9.1 The site promotor has asked for amendments to criterion 8, 9 & 10 of the site policy for the site, as well as amendments to development management policies HOU1, HOU3 and SA1. There is agreement to ongoing discussions regarding the points raised between the parties.

10. Signatures

Signed on behalf of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council:

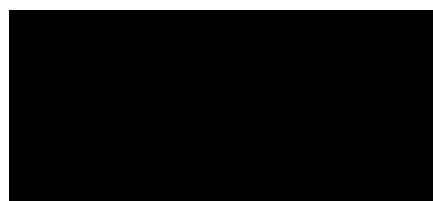


Name: Allan Clarke

Position: Planning Policy Manager

Date: 12 February 2025

Signed on behalf of Paul Smith Strategic Land Group:



Name: PAUL SMITH

Position: MANAGING DIRECTOR

Date: 11 FEBRUARY 2025

