

## THISTLEBERRY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

### Response to Inspector's Queries re the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan

#### MATTER SEVEN – HOUSING POLICIES

7.1 Deliverability and affordable housing seem incompatible in a market economy where profit is a driving force. Developers are not necessarily philanthropic. It is for the Inspector to decide if the figures add up re affordable housing numbers.

Homes for elderly persons within an estate development seem not to have been mentioned, although their needs are special and this NBC has an aging population.

The First Home concept is similar to that of the affordable home. Both are only realised if they are kept outside and shielded from market forces. Does affordable also mean cheap? Is it the same as First Time Buyer?

Green Belt sites might suggest expensive land. Unsuitable sites usually suggest cheaper and affordable housing. Are these terms Orwellian speak?

7.2 Unsure since developers are concerned with the housing market demand not necessarily with housing need. See 7.1 response.

7.3 (a) Don't know. Perhaps the Inspector might decide.

(b) a and b might only be apparent on implementation and by putting the policies into practice. It will also depend on the Inspector's view of 'soundness' of the policies and plans.

7.4 (a) Not sure since Gypsies and Travellers are not really considered and seem to be at the bottom of any queue for resources (space, place and accommodation) – which can make a mockery of any equality policies. Since 1994 they appear to have been ignored (only one pitch added to this site).

(b) Probably not and the assessment is likely to be an under statement since waiting lists and records of unauthorised sites are not always accurate and/or up to date. At one point the children on site asked for a play area on a small patch of land within the site. This was refused. It later housed the extra pitch.

(c) We have not seen the site west of Silverdale Business Park. Will this be further away from amenities, particularly schools? It will be depend on the kind of accommodation being provided. If it is caravans then this will be 'more of the same' and might not be in line with Gypsy/Traveller aspirations,

which might no longer be a caravan. The 9-hole golf course suggested by the TRA has not even been considered in this Plan or as part of the plan for the overall golf course development. This might contravene equalities policies, and the Race Relations Act.

**(d)** Probably to the letter and any interpretation which limits scope and /or advancement for this group.

**(e)** Flexibility will depend on interpretation of the policies. The Inspector might need to decide.

**7.5 (a)** Don't know but would this apply to Gypsies and Travellers too?

**Re point 2** - Don't know. Preferred sites for LAs and developers are green field sites.

**Re point 3** - Don't know. That would be up to the LPA and the view of elected Officers. It sounds reasonable but how it would work out in practice with several developers on site might be problematic.

**Re point 4** - This would rely on the selling and buying markets. Some homes in parts of this LA take more than one year to sell.

**Re point 5** - The effectiveness of the policy would depend on the interpretation, and after implementation. The issue of the new planning rules was to make the process easier and more streamlined to understand. It is doubtful if this is the case. The amount of documentation to be read if the Plan is to be fully understood is overwhelming and confusing, also contradictory in places.

**7.6 Point 1** - It really does depend on how the term 'exceptional' is interpreted by the LPA and subsequent Inspectors. Developers prefer green field sites.

**Re Point 2** - Don't know but perhaps we should.

**Re Point 3** - Re First Homes- this depends on how the term 'First' is interpreted. (eg the First Home could be the second or third home in terms of use - but the first home in terms of individual purchase). There would seem to be increasing confusion between First Homes/Affordable Homes/Social Housing. All these are attempts, it seems to ensure home ownership. However, whilst some can afford to buy a home they cannot afford its upkeep - the government had the same issue with its housing stock, when it owned houses - maintenance. This issue has never been resolved, it seems, and buy-to-let was a poor solution in an attempt to fill the social housing gap, as many new landlords discovered.

7.7 - Don't know. The point of policy is to aid compliance and sound implementation - which was suggested as a way to speed up the planning process.

Dr A Drakakis-Smtih 29 April 2025