



Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan Examination

Action Point 6 – provide a note on the approach to assessing the potential of surplus open space to accommodate housing

1. The Local Plan promotes allocations on five areas that were used historically as sports, recreational and open space uses. These being - KS3 Land at Blackbank Road; KS17 Knutton Recreation Centre, Knutton; BL18 Land at Clough Hall; SP11 Lyme Park, Silverdale; TK6 Land at Coalpit Hill, Talke.
2. In the case of site KS17, planning permission has recently been granted for 55 dwellings with associated access – application reference 23/00771/FUL.
3. The remaining four sites identified represent those areas that whilst historically they have had sports/active recreational uses take place, for varying numbers of years up to the current day they have not been utilised for such purposes.
4. KS3 is a site considered within wider Masterplanning proposals for the Knutton area. This site has not been in formal active use since 2021 (with the educational playing field ties ceasing some years prior to this [ED012, pg 17]), with analysis in ED012 (Table 2.14 pg 35 under the Blackbank site name) revealing the poor-quality of playing pitches found at the time of survey. This conclusion being reflected accordingly in ED029 (pg 229), and the policy stance for KS3 (policy limb 12) in CD01 (pg 125).
5. Similarly, TK6 was also a former school playing field, albeit the Council's position is that it is a lapsed site owing to the period from which it's been last actively used - 2008.
6. Land at Clough Hall, with Policy BL18 [ED01] reflecting its extant circumstances in stating that development will be permitted subject to the retention and improvement of playing pitches, with appropriate ancillary facilities for football use. Land at Clough Hall was considered lapsed / disused in the Planning Pitch

Strategy [ED012, pg 75]. Following the outcomes of the Playing Pitch Strategy Stage E Update[ED012a, pg 27] it is considered that the site provides for the retention of pitches, alongside the provision of 150 new homes [CD01, pg 150].

7. SP11 as the former Keele golf course (which closed circa a decade ago) incorporates proposals for a wider countryside setting to include the retention of trees and maintenance of a high quality ecological and natural resource with appropriate walking and cycling routes through the site. Identified areas of formal and informal open space will as well be retained and enhanced.
8. ED022 (para's 4.18 – 4.19) affirms the status of the former Keele golf course, and the rationale for it not being included in the open space strategy assessment, due to the site not providing existing publicly accessible open space provision. It does recognise, however, that there are public rights of way crossing the site and there is some unauthorised informal recreational use. Of the four development parcels found in SP11, Parcel SP11 (4) - Park Road, was assessed in ED022 (Appendices, pg 57 Site 244) with it being classed as a Low Quality/Low Value local, natural & semi-natural greenspace.
9. Open space more generally, and as evaluated within ED022, it is contended presents limited opportunities for residential and/or employment development, primarily in light of the need to have regard to the acknowledged health, recreation and amenity benefits accrued from their retention, the extent of mitigation required to compensate for any loss, as well as addressing issues of alternative types of open space provision that may be deficient. It is also acknowledged that demands on, and the value of, existing open space may evolve as new residential developments come to fruition.
10. In terms of development management, Policy SE6 [ED01] and, in particular, SE6 (policy limb 4) reaffirms the NPPF tests in relation to the parameters for the assessment of proposals which result in the loss of existing green /open space, sports and recreational buildings and land.
11. The Statement of Common Ground signed between Sport England and the Council [EX/SCG/02] highlights the intent to update the Playing Pitch Strategy [ED012] and the anticipated timelines for this to attain completion by March 2026.