



Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan Examination

Council response to Inspector's Post Hearing Advice

The Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan examination hearing sessions were held over three weeks in May and June, and following these, the Inspector's post hearing advice was published in August 2025 setting out the next steps for the Council in relation to the examination. The following identifies a number of the key points raised in the post hearing letter, from the Council's perspective: -

1. The Inspector's thanks the Council for the constructive and helpful approach throughout the examination.
2. **Duty-to-Co-operate** – The Council notes that the Inspector is satisfied that the Council has complied with the Duty-to-Co-operate. This is a positive finding as it demonstrates the Council, neighbouring local planning authorities and other public bodies have engaged constructively and on an ongoing basis in relation to the Local Plan.
3. **General approach** – The Council notes that the Inspector has indicated that the Local Plan, subject to modifications (and accompanying consultation), can be taken forward to adoption in a reasonable timescale. This is a positive finding.
4. **Accessibility and the Transport Implications of the Plan** – The Council notes that the Inspector is satisfied that to ensure new development on sites to the west of Newcastle can be accessed by sustainable means, the provision of link road from the A525 Keele Road to the A53 Whitmore Road is justified and necessary for the Plan to be effective.
5. Further work is ongoing with parties including the Council, Staffordshire County Council and the respective site promoters for KL15 & TB19 to establish the nature of the link, a broad indication of the safeguarded route, an estimated cost and how the route will be funded. In this vein, statements of common ground with the respective site promoters addressing some of these issues have been submitted to the Inspector and will be published on the Local Plan examination website in due course.

6. **Town Centre Sites** – the Council has submitted information to the Inspector, following the examination hearings in relation to town centre developments and the provision of surface level car parks in the town centre. The Council awaits further instructions in the coming weeks from the Inspector, pending the outcomes of her ongoing review of that information that has sought to provide assurance that the town centre will be adequately served by sufficient car parking provision in the future.
7. **Minerals Safeguarding** – Following the Local Plan examination hearings, the Council submitted information to the Inspector around the approach to Minerals Safeguarding Areas and the approach to Draft Site Allocations in the Plan. The Council notes that Staffordshire County Council have not objected to allocations included in the Local Plan based on the presence of Minerals. The Council notes that the Inspector has asked for further assurance on the impact of mineral resources on several site allocations.
8. In accordance with the Inspector's request, the Council will continue to engage with Staffordshire County Council to establish any prospective minerals constraints, including the nature of the resource and whether abstraction is likely to be required prior to development. This will be reported to the Inspector in due course and within published timeframes.
9. **Site Selection Flood Risk** – The Council notes that the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and additional flood risk information has been submitted to the Inspector during the examination of the Local Plan.
10. In line with the Inspector's request, the Council will provide further detailed information to demonstrate the wider sustainability objectives those allocations that fall within higher levels of flood risk would meet.
11. Further work by the Council will also reflect on the latest flood risk evidence and the advice it provides to ensure that the allocations remain sound, taking in to account the likely future effects of flood risk. This extends to consideration of the number of new homes, and by when, that it may be possible to deliver on a given site.
12. The Inspector's conclusion that allocation AB33 should be removed from the Plan owing to its flood risk, is also recognised.

13. **Employment Allocations** – The Council notes that the Inspector has accepted the argument that exceptional circumstances exist for land to be released from the Green Belt to meet employment requirements. This is a positive finding.
14. The concerns that the Inspector raises regarding individual allocations are also recognised and considered below:
15. **University Sites** – The Council notes that the Inspector has outstanding issues about the timetable for delivery of the University sites and requires more information and certainty about how the sites are intended to come forward.
16. The Council will engage with the University and form a collective view on appropriate modifications being made to Policies KL13 & KL15.
17. **BW1 Chatterley Valley** - The Inspector has raised the issue of Minerals Safeguarding (as described above), and the Council will consider the implications of this for the site's delivery.
18. **Land at Junction 16 (AB2)** – The Council notes the issues raised by the Inspector relating to the size of the site and whether alternative options were considered in this location, potentially for less employment space and involving a release of less Green Belt land. Minerals safeguarding is also highlighted. This will be addressed by the Council in consultation with the site promotor.
19. The Council will respond to the Inspector's queries regarding the AB2 (Land at Junction 16 site).
20. **The housing requirement and site allocations** – The Council notes that the Inspector is satisfied that the housing requirement is justified, and exceptional circumstances exist for Green Belt release to meet the borough's housing requirement. These are positive findings.
21. However, it is recognised that there are comments on several specific proposed site allocations where changes / more information is required. This position is acknowledged, and the Council will give due regard to, as follows: -
 - a. **AB12 Diglake Street and AB33 Land off Nantwich Road (Audley sites)** – The Inspector recommends removal of these sites from the Local Plan. The consequent spatial implications for Audley are being considered by the Council.

- b. CT1 Land at Red Street, Chesterton** – The Inspector has asked for more information on Green Belt impacts, the need for traffic calming, the make-up of a local retail centre on the site and issues of historic mining and contamination. The Council will address this.
- c. SP11 Lyme Park Silverdale** – The Inspector has asked for further consideration to be given to the site masterplan for SP11 and following debate at the hearing sessions how the allocation and development boundary relates to the delineation of the Green Belt. The Council's view is that the County Park element of SP11 Lyme Park, Silverdale can be retained in the Green Belt and will be preparing a response to the Inspector on that basis.
- d. BL18 Land at Clough Hall** – The Inspector has asked the Council to provide an assessment of impacts on a Site of Biological Importance. This is going to be addressed by the Council in consultation with Staffordshire County Council.
- e. TB19 – Land South of Newcastle Golf Club** – Alongside the issue of the link road (set out above), further consideration is required of the Green Belt boundary for the site which currently includes areas of landscaped open space. This will be addressed by the Council in consultation with the site promotor.
- f. Removal of housing sites – CH13 (land at Castletown Grange) and KS3 (Land at Blackbank Road) - alongside sites AB12 and AB33** - The Inspector recommends removing these sites from the Local Plan as these are not considered to be justified. The Council notes the changes proposed to the Local Plan.
- g. Housing Trajectory** – For those sites in proximity to Walley's Quarry (SP23/SP11(4), TB6 and TB23), it is noted that the Inspector wishes the Council to push back delivery to a later timeframe, whilst remaining part of the Local Plan. This is noted and the Council will prepare an updated housing trajectory in line with the Inspector's recommendations in the Post Hearing Note.
- h. Removal of site G&T8 Land West of Silverdale Business Park** – The Inspector has requested removal of the Gypsy and Traveller site proposed at Silverdale. The Council notes this request and has not been asked to provide an alternative site at this time.

22. Compensatory Improvements – are ways, set out in the Local Plan to provide compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land to offset the loss of Green Belt. The Council's initial position, in the Local Plan, is to consider this matter at the development management stage. However, the Council notes the Inspector's view that further

assurance is required at the Plan making level that this matter can be suitably addressed in a deliverable way. The Council will consider this matter further and respond to the Inspector in due course.

- 23. Neighbourhood Planning Requirements** – The Council submitted further information, following the examination hearing sessions, on how neighbourhood plan housing requirements could be defined. The Council awaits further instructions in the coming weeks from the Inspector, pending the outcomes of her ongoing review of that information.
- 24. Other policy wording** – The Council notes the Inspector’s intention to make comments in due course on suggested changes to policies, such as Policy SA1 General Development Principles & SE9 Historic Environment, as well as those presented in the Schedule of Modifications.
- 25. Next Steps** – The Council notes the Inspector’s request to receive a timescale for undertaking any necessary work within 2 weeks of the date of her letter, and her aim to then consider any issues raised and identify the next steps of the Examination.