



Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan Examination

Response to Inspectors Post Examination Hearing Views – Keele University

1. The Inspector in her post examination hearing views (EX/INS/06) noted the following:-

“17. Notwithstanding my concerns in relation to the link road expressed above, from the information put to me at the hearing, it would appear that the University do not intend to develop KL13 and KL15 sequentially but rather intend to develop both sites simultaneously and incrementally. I was also advised that the employment uses at KL15 would be B1 type research and development or light industrial uses which would benefit from co-location with the University. Housing on site would be in support of the University function and so would be student housing. This is reinforced by the Strategic Employment Sites Assessment Doc ED002.

18. It was put to me that the exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release in this location include the unique benefits provided by co-location with the University which lends itself to development as set out above. However, neither Policy KL13 nor KL15 as drafted place a restriction on the nature of the employment uses or housing type on site. In the absence of an up-to-date Masterplan for the estate I also have no indication of the timescale for development and whether all of the site will be required during the Plan period. The Council should consider how the Plan can address these concerns.”

2. The matter of the Keele Link Road has been addressed through examination document EX/NBC/40, linked to statements of common ground with Richborough (EX/SCG/11) and Keele University (EX/NBC/12).
3. Following engagement with Keele University regarding policy wording contained in the Local Plan for employment uses and house types, it is considered that the wording for KL13 is consistent with the outline planning permission on the site. In respect of site KL15, the University and the Council agree that the introduction to the policy [CD01, pg 130] makes clear that the dwellings on site are intended for student accommodation. This may also cover University staff, and the Council

would be willing to include a modification to the policy in this regard. The policy introduction also makes clear that employment uses are related to the operation, research and development of the University alongside its core functions. There is agreement between the University and the Council on the suitability of the wording used in this regard.

4. In respect of the expected delivery, Keele University has provided a supplementary letter which is attached to this note. The letter emphasises the different but complementary role and size of sites expected on KL13 and KL15. KL13 continues to be delivered for comparatively smaller units of circa 5,000sqm, predominately for research, development and manufacturing. KL15, in contrast, can facilitate larger footprint buildings to respond to new enquiries and to also allow existing tenants to grow. For the University, the option to develop a range of site sizes between the respective sites is a key element of the unique 'offer' from the University and promotes the creation of an innovation district which supports the wider campus.
5. The University has also indicated that both KL13 and KL15 are capable of being delivered in the next 10-15 years and hence by the end of the Plan period. The University has provided a list of active enquiries on the site (in Appendix 1) to demonstrate interest. The active enquiry list also shows how different size requirements are currently being requested by potential occupiers.
6. The University has also highlighted the fact that the wider extent of the University site, circa 600 acres (243 hectares), is capable of providing enhancement works on Green Belt land, in the University ownership, to offset the release of land from the Green Belt through the Local Plan. Reference is made to public realm and accessibility improvements around the wider campus area. It is considered therefore that compensatory improvements can be delivered following the release of the KL15 site from the Green Belt. This will be addressed also in a separate note on Green Belt compensatory improvements.

Appendix 1: Letter from Keele University