



**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990**

**Appeal by: Accrue (Forum) 1 LLP  
Site Address: Former B&Q Site, Great Stone Road,  
Stretford, M32 0YP**

**LPA reference: 100400/OUT/20  
PINS reference: APP/Q4245/W/20/3258552**

**PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF MS. REBECCA COLEY  
ON BEHALF OF THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY**

**REGARDING TRAFFORD'S HOUSING LAND SUPPLY**

*My name is Rebecca Coley and I am the Head of Planning and Development at Trafford Council. I have nineteen years' experience in the field of town and country planning in the public sector, with previous experience at three other Local Planning Authorities. During the course of my professional career I have been involved in many aspects of the planning process, including the processing of planning applications and appeals, conservation and heritage; viability assessment and review; the drafting and production of development plan policy and Supplementary Planning Guidance, and now the strategic leadership of the Council's planning function.*

*I have been in my present role, and employed by Trafford Council, since February 2016. I am the Council's lead authority on matters of town and country planning, advising the Corporate Leadership Team, Members, including the Executive and the Planning Committee, and senior officers on the Council's Place Shaping Board. I lead and manage the Planning and Development Service, the remit of which includes the processing of all planning applications submitted to the Council, including large scale major applications; a large part of the Council's development plan and other planning policy work, including the adoption of Area Action Plans for the Civic Quarter and Stretford; and the monitoring of development on the ground.*

*I have had oversight of all the large scale development proposals coming forward in the approaching six years I have been in post as Head of Planning and Development. In the years 2005-2008, I was a Senior Planning Officer for the Council and case officer for a number of large scale major applications in the Borough. I am involved in a large number of corporate projects providing planning advice for the Council's own investment and development portfolio. I therefore have an extensive knowledge of the factors underpinning development decisions across the Borough. I am involved in proposals to unlock the Carrington Relief Road and I am the Senior Responsible Officer for both the Civic Quarter and Stretford Area Action Plans.*

*I hold a Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in Geography from the University of Manchester and a postgraduate Master of Arts degree in Town and Regional Planning from the University of Sheffield. I am a chartered member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PRELIMINARY MATTERS**

- 1.1 This proof of evidence draws on my experience of leading Trafford's Planning and Development Service for now approaching six years and the Council's own planning permissions and completions data, together with evidence from developers. This demonstrates that the problem of a lack of housing land supply has previously lain not with anything the Council may or may not do, but with land speculation by developers and landowners. A new approach from the Council to delivery and supply, including its own intervention in the market, has, over the previous two years, led to sites now coming forward at pace and as a result a much improved supply and delivery position. A grant of outline planning permission for the appeal scheme will reverse this progress.
  
- 1.2 The Council's most recently published 5 year housing land supply figure (March 2021) is 2.58 years. However, at November 2021, this stands at 4.41 years, following a comprehensive review of sites (including new permissions) making up the supply. As requested by the Inspector, an Addenda setting out the Council's housing land supply position was submitted to PINS on 1 December 2021. This comprises an updated calculation of the supply and a table of additional sites contained within the November 2021 supply when compared to the position at March 2021. The appellant disputes the inclusion of a number of these sites. Appendix 1 contains the list of sites in the November 2021 supply. Appendices 2a) to 2z) contain supporting evidence for the inclusion of the sites which were in dispute at the time of the housing land supply Addenda, with the exception of The Square, Sale, which is now agreed.
  
- 1.3 The housing land supply figure arises not from any failure of the Council to allocate sufficient land or to grant permission when applications are made but from a failure of major landowners to bring forward development or to apply for reserved matters and instead to engage in land speculation. There is no shortage of land in Trafford, no actual shortage of land supply for housing and no impediment to delivery. The problem is unrealistic expectations of land values and thus landowners holding back until the Council agrees to give way on matters such as density, infrastructure and affordable housing contributions. In the last 12 – 18 months, the Council has focused on the real cause of the problem and has actively engaged with landowners to ensure that their sites are brought forward (on pain of CPO if necessary) and challenged the prevailing narrative on land values. The Council has pushed back on unrealistic assumptions of

land value holding back s.106 negotiations and approval of reserved matters. It has also entered into significant joint venture arrangements with private sector partners to bring forward its own landholdings and with those partners has acquired land for residential development. This is starting to have effect. The recent robust stance of the Council has been reflected in much improved delivery, assisted, it is acknowledged, by favourable market conditions, and an improved quality of scheme coming forward as planning applications.

- 1.4 The land value expectation on this site has driven an excessively large and intense development and a lack of appropriate s.106 obligations. Granting permission here would undermine rather than support delivery because it would entrench the wrong historic narrative that inappropriate development can come forward to maximise land value whilst failing to deliver the infrastructure and affordable housing necessary to meet the needs of the new population.
- 1.5 The Council now finds itself in a position with much improved supply and delivery. Schemes are coming forward into reserved matters and as full applications. However, some of the completions have not yet been replaced by new schemes coming forward, thus leading to the current deficit in housing land supply. There is a natural delay, worsened in the last 18 months by the impact of restrictions associated with the pandemic, in a developer deciding to bring a scheme forward and a planning application being submitted. The Council's current 5 year housing land supply is therefore an artificially deflated figure which represents a snapshot in time.
- 1.6 Despite the greatly improved land supply position, the sites included in the supply (and more pertinently, *not* included) have still been approached with rigour and a degree of caution. There are a number of significant schemes which have not been included in the land supply but that I am aware developers are very keen to bring forward and will likely come into the supply in the next 12 months. Thus the land supply does not yet give the true picture of a greatly improving situation as developers adopt more realistic land value and development potential expectations leading to a virtuous circle of more appropriate permissions being delivered with the infrastructure and affordable housing they require, together with the Council's own intervention in the market bringing forward significant numbers of new homes. The 5 year HLS shortfall should therefore be given less weight in the planning (tilted) balance than would be the case if the problem arose from lack of land or refusal of the Council to grant appropriate permissions.

1.7 This proof of evidence is based on the facts of the cases discussed and my experience in dealing with them and I do not therefore produce all the documents. All supporting information for any planning application referred to is on the Council's Public Access website.

1.8 After I have laid out the facts I make reasonable inference from them, backed up by my experience in these matters and the manner in which development proposals in Trafford have played out in practice.

## **2.0 PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND**

2.1 The adopted Core Strategy (2012) has at its forefront a 'vision' for the Borough. It focuses economic and housing growth within the urban area, primarily in the north east of the Borough. It identifies immediately five Strategic Locations as areas for change.

2.2 The Core Strategy then goes on to explain how this vision will be achieved (inter alia):

*'Attractive, sustainable communities, with good access to jobs, services and green infrastructure / multi-functional green space will be established across Trafford with a range of housing types and tenures (including affordable housing)'.*

2.3 The potential for significant, strategic change in the Borough underpinned the identification of the five Strategic Locations, which are an important element in the achievement of the Core Strategy. These are:-

- Pomona Island (SL1)
- Trafford Wharfside (SL2)
- Lancashire County Cricket Club Quarter (SL3)
- Trafford Centre Rectangle (SL4) and
- Carrington (SL5).

2.4 Each of the Strategic Locations has its own individual Core Strategy policy (SL1 to SL5 respectively – see Core Documents CD-H1) which sets out what will be delivered and the essential requirements (e.g. infrastructure) to ensure development can be delivered

in a sustainable way. Substantial housing and employment development, supported by the requisite infrastructure, is proposed for each of the Strategic Locations.

- 2.5 Core Strategy Policy L1 – Land for New Homes sets out the proposed scale and distribution of housing in the Borough during the plan period, and in the written justification, how the Strategic Locations will contribute to this.
- 2.6 Core Strategy Policy L3 – Regeneration and Reducing Inequalities seeks to bring forward appropriate development within Regeneration Areas and that the Council will support appropriate development which will reduce inequalities; secure regeneration benefits; create truly sustainable communities and make positive contributions to achieving the Plan's Strategic and Place objectives.
- 2.7 The contribution (or otherwise) of the Strategic Locations to the Council's housing land supply and delivery will be returned to later in this proof of evidence.
- 2.8 Policy L8 – Planning Obligations of the adopted Core Strategy (Core Documents sets out the Council's approach to obtaining planning obligations and developer contributions where planning conditions cannot reasonably be used to mitigate an impact and an obligation meets the CIL Regulation 122 tests.

### **3.0 ALLOCATIONS, PERMISSIONS, DELIVERY AND SUPPLY**

- 3.1 A significant proportion of the Council's housing requirement has always been intended to be delivered in the Strategic Locations identified in the adopted Core Strategy. The target housing figure across the Strategic Locations was uplifted from the adopted Core Strategy target of 4,710 to a new 'residential allowance' of 13,359 in March 2020. Further work on development phasing, delivery rates and restricting the figure to within the plan period (to 2037) reduced this figure to 9,699 in March 2021. This uplift secures the LHN for Trafford and should provide both the incentive and viability to bring these allocations forward quickly.
- 3.2 The Council has made ample allocations of suitable sites in sustainable locations where it will grant planning permission consistent with its development management policies. When the Council has allocated sites, developers and landowners have made the case themselves that they are deliverable.

- 3.3 The Council grants planning permission for a significant amount of residential development. It welcomes well designed schemes of appropriate scale which contribute positively to the area in which they are located and appropriately mitigate their impacts. In the years 2018 – 2021, 81% of major residential planning applications were granted permission.
- 3.4 The gross figure for residential permissions granted (including those on appeal) between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2021 is 8,960. The net figure is 8,737. If three ‘minded to grants’ are added it would be 9,912 gross and 9,680 net. Therefore over the last three years the Council has granted permission for between c. 3200 and 3300 units per annum. This figure is increasing significantly, with the average over the same period between 2017 and 2020 being between c. 1800 and 2100 units.
- 3.5 The current, upward adjusted LHN per annum is 1,377, and with a 20% buffer for under delivery is 1,652. The Council is therefore granting more than enough permissions to meet supply, even if one applies a substantial non-implementation allowance.
- 3.6 However, the permissions granted fail to translate into housing land supply (4.41 years) or completions (3,100 gross between April 2018 and March 2021). Delivery is nevertheless recently much improved with the three year average increasing from 768 dwellings per annum (2017-2020) to 1033 dwellings per annum (2018-2021). The HDT measurement for Trafford has increased accordingly; from 58% (2019) to 61% (2020). The latest HDT does not include the most recent delivery figures, however, and 93% of the LHN was delivered in 2020 – 21.

#### Land speculation in Trafford

- 3.7 Much land in Trafford is under the control of a few major landowners, particularly in the Strategic Locations, and is therefore vulnerable to their investment decisions. Landowners with a variety of landholdings across the UK will make commercial decisions about which sites to bring forward and absentee landowners often expect inflated land values more akin to those in London and the South East.
- 3.8 Planning applications, particularly outline permissions are used as a speculative land valuation exercise and to increase book values of an asset, against which a developer



or landowner can borrow to invest elsewhere. They are not used, as they should be, to deliver housing, and thus do not translate into a five year housing land supply or delivery on the ground.

- 3.9 Developers also attempt to remove any constraints or obligations required by planning policy, particularly in relation to affordable housing. This was successful prior to 2017, but subsequently there has been more robust interrogation of viability assessments.
- 3.10 Developers and landowners have historically not carried out a PPG compliant analysis of BLV, using hope value or Red Book value rather than EUV+. As a result there is said to be no room for planning obligations given the land value and if these are negotiated these come from developer profit. If sites are 'flipped' the new owner tries to further reduce obligations or sits on sites until the market rises.
- 3.11 Developers are willing to take a risk on profit levels and will develop at as little as 13% profit. Invariably a developer bidding on a site on a planning policy compliant basis will be outbid by one which is not.
- 3.12 The result is that land speculation makes it extremely challenging for Trafford to deliver a five year housing land supply no matter how proactive it is in granting permissions and allocating land. It also affects infrastructure provision as developers expect the public purse or others to deliver that infrastructure, and then eventually stalls development.
- 3.13 A relaxation of the Council's policies would not solve the problem as development needs infrastructure, to respect its surroundings, and to mitigate its impacts to proceed in a sustainable way. It may kick start delivery but not enable delivery at pace given the amount of land tied up in single ownerships. In any event, the evidence shows that delivery of housing numbers accelerated after 2017 and a more robust approach from the Council in seeking a policy compliant level of developer contributions and subsequent delivery.

#### **4.0 THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGY: RESETTling EXPECTATIONS**

- 4.1 Having identified the issues endemic in delivery, the Council had a choice; to grant planning permission contrary to development plan policy for development which is not sustainable (and which has not in any case, guaranteed delivery historically), or to force sustainable development on suitable sites in accordance with development plan policy. It chose the latter as the solution as the former approach had not seen delivery improve.
- 4.2 Prior to 2017 the Council acceded to developers' demands. However, this was ineffective as expectations of density, infrastructure and (lack of) obligations simply escalated, whilst real world evidence quickly undermined assertions in viability appraisals, particularly in relation to sales values, and a lack of infrastructure was stalling development.
- 4.3 At Alderbank, Altrincham, for example, the FVA suggested projected sales values would be between £195,000 and £579,000. It was claimed that no affordable housing could be viably offered. The properties are currently being marketed at between £450,000 and £800,000, and one of the apartments sold in March 2021 for £940,355, with two others selling in June 2021 for £775,000 and May 2021 for £645,000. At Pleasant Drive, Davyhulme, the FVA suggested sales values would be between £387,000 and £431,600 although actual sales prices were between £690,000 and £735,000. A contribution of just £22,500 towards affordable housing was claimed to be viable.
- 4.4 Ironically, the Council's greatest power in forcing delivery is to refuse – or threaten to refuse – planning applications. Only then will developers and landowners realise that the Council is absolutely serious about the need for them to meet their obligations and to adjust their expectations accordingly. A permissive approach, allocating sites and granting planning permission – even where (or perhaps because) those permissions have a great deal of flexibility – has not been effective. The Council cannot allocate more land outside of the development plan process – it has tightly drawn Green Belt boundaries and its available land is brownfield and already allocated.

- 4.5 The Council has, since 2017, taken a more robust approach to the scrutiny of viability assessments. Although it has taken some time for the message to trickle through, and often applications are still being submitted with zero or low offers of developer contributions, they are increasingly being presented to Committee with officers having secured a policy compliant or close to policy compliant approach to contributions.
- 4.6 The recent Warburton Lane appeal decision (ref. APP/Q4245/W/19/3243720) (Core Documents CD-L1) demonstrated the robustness of the Council's approach to seeking a policy compliant level of affordable housing. The appellant, Redrow Homes, offered zero affordable housing against a policy requirement of 45%. The Inspector did not find it necessary to consider every one of the disputed inputs, but on those she did, she agreed with the Council's evidence in these matters. She considered that costs had been inflated and values were too low, and preferred the Council's evidence on EUV, land value premium, sales values and costs. This led to the conclusion (Paragraph 141 of the Inspector's Report) that *'effectively the risk to the developer is reduced at the expense of the public purse... on the available evidence, there would appear to be a sufficient residual value to fund 45% affordable housing or at the very least a significant proportion'*. Having applied the tilted balance, the appeal was dismissed with the failure to provide affordable housing given very significant weight, which together with the conflict with the spatial strategy in the development plan and the harm to landscape, significantly and demonstrably outweighed the benefits of the scheme.
- 4.7 The Council is leading the way itself and demonstrating to the market that planning policy compliant, exemplar schemes are capable of being and are being delivered. Through its property and development portfolio the Council is delivering its own schemes through JVs or with development partners. The Council has a Joint Venture arrangement with Bruntwood Works which is bringing forward residential development in Stretford, Old Trafford and Altrincham totalling c. 1600 units. The Planning Service is involved from the outset with the schemes, advising on planning policy requirements and assisting with the design process to ensure that the schemes brought forward reflect the Council's aspirations.
- 4.8 The following schemes are currently being brought forward by the Council in its role as developer:-

- Brown Street, Hale – 22 dwellings, including 55% affordable housing, under construction and nearing completion.
- Former Magistrates Court, Sale – 81 dwellings, with 25% affordable housing. Permission granted March 2021, construction expected to commence spring 2022.
- Lumina Village, Old Trafford – up to 750 units, with 36% affordable housing (15% delivered via S106), alongside office space and a new primary school. Glenbrook have taken up delivery of the first 630 units and are in detailed pre-application discussions with officers, with reserved matters applications expected March 2022, construction expected to commence mid-2022. The reserved matters scheme contains four different outlets, the majority of which are in three apartment blocks, enabling delivery at pace.
- Stretford Town Centre – up to 800 units, including 30% affordable via a mixture of S106 and grant funding, outline application together with full application for enabling works under consideration and determination expected in March 2022. Discussions already underway with a developer about disposal and delivery of the first phase of residential. The Council is independently bringing forward a scheme for the Lacy Street part of the site, with reserved matters expected very shortly after a grant of outline consent. £17m of Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) secured.
- Clarendon House, Altrincham – 68 units with a developer on board and a full planning application expected early in 2022.
- Several smaller schemes totalling c. 60 units coming forward to full planning applications in 2022.

4.9 The Council has, through its development and investment strategy, and where necessary in joint venture partnerships, acquired land in order to bring it forward for residential development. It has quite deliberately intervened in the market to bring forward sites that were previously underutilised and with little or no interest from previous landowners in making better use of them. This is combined with interventions to bring forward wider regeneration benefits, particularly in the Borough's town centres.

- Lumina Village – formerly Kelloggs’ HQ building, acquired by the Council for £12m to accommodate University Academy 92 and bring forward significant residential development.
- Stretford Town Centre – Stretford Mall acquired by the Council for £17m and the former Royal Mail sorting office at Lacy Street acquired for £900k.
- Clarendon House – part of a wider acquisition of the Stamford Quarter in Altrincham town centre for £33m.
- Sale Magistrates Court – acquired from the Ministry of Justice for £3.5m.

4.10 At Stretford, the Council has taken steps to acquire strategically important assets in the town centre, and through having control of these assets and Stretford Mall, is now in a position where it can deliver a comprehensive transformation of Stretford rather than a series of piecemeal interventions. The FHSF funding will be used for public realm, but also other configuration changes to the Mall site and surrounding infrastructure to help unlock redevelopment of the wider town centre which will help to deliver the residential development proposed for the site.

4.11 Additionally, the Council has acted quickly to take advantage of the developer interest in the Civic Quarter, drawing up an Area Action Plan which proposes up to 4000 new homes (2690 in plan period) with the infrastructure and facilities to support it (including a new primary school). The AAP does not specifically allocate sites, but is a designed, bottom up plan to deliver medium – high density residential development in an area of disparate landownerships, with that significant step change in the scale and nature of residential development managed through sound planning and development management principles. It is well placed to do this as the Lumina Village scheme sits at the heart of the Civic Quarter.

4.12 The Civic Quarter AAP is now well advanced and has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination following approval of the submission draft by Planning Committee on 11 November 2021. An Inspector has been appointed and an Examination in Public is provisionally timetabled for w/c 21 February 2022.

4.13 The Council is also using its CPO powers more robustly. Presently, Council officers have agreement from the Executive to bring forward CPO proceedings at the appeal site and another site in the Civic Quarter, Charlton House. There is also in principle

agreement from Executive for CPO powers to be utilised across the whole of the Civic Quarter AAP area, but with further authority required for CPO action to proceed on individual sites.

- 4.14 The Council will also not hesitate to use its CPO powers elsewhere to force delivery on other sites where development is not proceeding, and to unlock development sites. Indeed, although at an early stage, the Council is discussing the use of its CPO powers in land assembly to assist another public sector organisation to bring forward a scheme which would deliver greater benefits than one limited to its own landholdings alone.

## 5.0 THE IMPACT ON THE STRATEGIC LOCATIONS

- 5.1 Up until 2020 delivery in the Strategic Locations was previously slow to non-existent but is now beginning to catch up. At March 2021, 25% of the Core Strategy target has now been delivered (as compared to 3% in March 2020) and 12% of the 2021 'residential allowance' (as compared to 1.8% in March 2020). In absolute terms, 178 units had been delivered in the Strategic Locations in March 2020 which rose to 1,180 in March 2021.

- 5.2 The Council now finds itself with housing land supply and HDT in a particular snap shot in time where its strategy to improve delivery has led to greater numbers of completions but the developers' schemes which are now coming forward are not yet finding their way into HDT and supply. Since March 2020 significant progress has been made in bringing forward development at each of the Strategic Locations.

- 5.3 SL1 – **Pomona** – a site in a single landownership (Peel) which has taken very many years to come forward – the first planning application on the site being in 2007. However, the most recent (and with an increased quantum) iteration of that 2007 scheme – for 742 units, is now being built out and the first phase is occupied. The permission for the second phase of this development required as an obligation in the S106 agreement a masterplan to be prepared, which was approved in March 2020. This masterplan includes an indicative number of up to 2,714 units but excludes those which have already been granted permission or have been built – giving an overall total across the site of 3,620 units.

- 5.4 Peel are now intending to bring the remainder of this site forward at pace. A full planning application for 162 units for the next development plot to come forward was submitted in November 2021 with a PPA in place for a February 2022 determination. This PPA also includes arrangements for pre-application discussions, submission and determination of an outline application for the remainder of the site (c. 2500 units) to be submitted in March 2022 and determined in September 2022.
- 5.5 SL2 – **Wharfside** – one site of 174 units has come forward and is recently completed and occupied (and thus has fallen out of the five year HLS). This site – No. 1 Old Trafford – is a very successful, exemplar scheme of significant design quality, which the Council worked extremely hard during the discharge of planning conditions to ensure was delivered with the design intent intact. Formal pre-application discussions have also commenced on two other major sites totalling c. 1200 units with planning applications expected in 2022. There is known interest in progressing another site of c. 800 units.
- 5.6 Progress on the Trafford Wharfside masterplan was suspended due to the pandemic but work has restarted, private sector match funding has been secured and it will be completed by May 2022. The brief includes production of a design code to ensure the successful delivery of high quality medium – high density residential development. It is expected that, like the Civic Quarter, this masterplan will trigger further developer interest in this area.
- 5.7 The developer of one of the Wharfside sites is very keen to submit a full planning application but has been asked to pause on the submission until the masterplan is further progressed. This is to ensure that the scheme sits properly within the masterplan framework and as part of a wider strategy for placemaking and that developments optimise, rather than maximise, the use of land.
- 5.8 SL3 – **LCC (now Civic) Quarter** – in disparate ownerships and has now delivered beyond the Core Strategy target of 400 (albeit the Core Strategy allocation was over a smaller area than the Civic Quarter). Much development interest is currently focused here. Design quality is key and the Council has worked hard with developers and architects to bring forward appropriately designed schemes and resist poor quality

development. The Council is also pump priming development by delivering its own scheme here at Lumina Village.

5.9 Sites which have come forward here include:-

- Kinetic and Insignia – 152 units: - part office to residential conversion, part new build, recently completed and occupied (and thus fallen out of 5 year HLS).
- Botanical House – 149 units, including 22% affordable housing, site clearance underway.
- Lumina Village – resolution to grant up to 750 units, including 15% affordable housing via S106, office and a new primary school. Education use already consented and operational. Reserved matters for 630 residential units, including an enhanced 36% affordable housing offer expected March 2022 and construction to start mid-2022.
- MKM House – extant consent for 88 units – revised scheme for increased density resisted on the basis of significant harms. Appeal lodged.
- 94a Talbot Road – development of c. 100 units progressing at pace towards a planning application.
- Chester Road – owned by Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner – scheme for c. 750 units coming forward to application in 2022. Soft market testing exercise completed October 2021 with interest from seven developers. In December 2021 the Council’s Executive approved the establishment of a Joint Venture arrangement with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and a developer partner to bring the site forward to a planning application. A developer partner will be appointed in April 2022.
- Pre-application discussions or known developer interest in bringing forward other available sites – totalling c. 1100 units.

5.10 SL4 – **Trafford Centre Rectangle** – another site in Peel’s single ownership. An outline planning application for 3000 units (against a Core Strategy allocation of 1050) has been granted but delivery was impossible until recently due to infrastructure constraints. This has now been unlocked by an agreement between the parties on the maintenance liability for major transport infrastructure (WGIS) and the ability for adoption of the WGIS Bridge to take place.



- 5.11 HIF funding has been secured and work on the design framework and other pre-commencement conditions is proceeding at pace via a PPA arrangement. The reserved matters applications for supporting road and other infrastructure has been submitted. Reserved matters for the first 350 units are expected in early 2022 respectively with a condition of the HIF being completion of the infrastructure by March 2023 and the housing by December 2025. Further development is expected to follow at pace at Trafford Waters.
- 5.12 SL5 – **Carrington** – substantively owned by Himor and with the entire 2021 residential allowance of 1203 units having been granted planning permission but only 7 units delivered. To bring forward any further development this Strategic Location needs significant road infrastructure – the Carrington Relief Road (CRR) – which currently has a funding gap of c. £12m. Prior to October 2020, all the developers bar one had their own schemes to make development acceptable and several planning permissions had been issued with Grampian / phasing conditions.
- 5.13 In October 2020 the Council adopted a new strategy to meet the funding gap for the CRR through a combination of S106 and CIL monies, in order to enable development to come forward more quickly and to pave the way for the PFE New Carrington allocation of a further 4000+ homes. Rather than restricting development until the CRR or alternative highway mitigation is in place, the Council has taken a proportionate payment towards the CRR and granted the planning applications without restriction. A total of £4,151,630 of CRR contributions has been secured via S106 agreement since October 2020. The following schemes are now able to come forward as a result:-
- Heath Farm Lane – hybrid permission for up to 600 units, with the 148 units subject to the full part of the outline application under construction and approaching occupation. Pre-application discussions are advanced on the next phase of development, which would comprise a reserved matters application for a further 129 units.
  - Carrington Village – the first 277 units have begun construction with occupation on completion of a separate highways improvement which is currently being undertaken by contractors on behalf of the Council (and funded via S106).

5.14 And served by the same infrastructure but outside the SL5 allocation – in Partington – a Priority Regeneration Area:-

- Lock Lane and Hall Lane – full / reserved matters permissions for 449 units, now under construction.
- Oak Road – full permission for 75 units, construction expected to start in 2022.

## 6.0 THE EMERGING LAND SUPPLY POSITION

6.1 The Council’s housing land supply, particularly in the Strategic Locations, is thus a rapidly improving position as the Council takes assertive action to bring forward sites into the supply and ensure that they can be delivered. The improved position at 4.41 years is due to sites now coming forward at pace into the supply, and this will continue and accelerate just on the basis of sites whose future progress is already known and understood.

6.2 Nevertheless, the 4.41 year figure is still put together with a significant degree of caution. It is not simply taking every potential available site in the Borough, nor suggesting unrealistic rates of delivery, particularly at the Strategic Locations. It also applies a conservative approach to the capacity of sites, with reasonable and contextual densities utilised. It does not take in any sites from future potential Green Belt release.

6.3 It is evident to me that there are a number of sites that have been excluded, which I would expect to come forward into full or reserved matters applications and be able to be evidenced in the next 12 months. I have therefore carried out an assessment of such sites, but which at present are not included with a relatively cautious approach to supply, set out in the table below.

Site	Units in 5 yr HLS	Units in 6-15yr HLS
<b>SL1 – Pomona</b>		
Pomona	350	2203
<b>SL2 - Wharfside</b>		
Wharfside Way A	400	150
Wharfside Way B	300	500
Metrolink	300	531

<b>SL3 - Civic Quarter</b>		
GMP site	200	428
Centrica	300	750
39 Talbot Road	56	
<b>SL4 - Trafford Centre Rectangle</b>		
Trafford Waters	150	2400
<b>SL5 - Carrington</b>		
Wain Homes RM approved	177	
Wain Homes Phase 5	148	303
<b>Others</b>		
Altair	59	393
Grafton Centre	60	
Hale Road	20	
Bridge Works	30	
499 Chester Road	300	
Empress	50	
Chester Road	60	
<b>Total (A)</b>	<b>3060</b>	
units already in 5yrs at Nov 2021 (B)	7285	
Total (A + B)	10245	
LHN + 20% buffer	1652.4	
<b>5 yr HLS with additional sites</b>	<b>6.20</b>	

- 6.4 Each of these sites is identified through discussions with developers or landowners where there is known interest in bringing them forward.
- 6.5 These sites coming forward into the supply in the next 12 months would give a land supply of 6.20 years, and assuming 1000 completions in the next 12 months would give 5.59 years supply.
- 6.6 Additionally, the Council is working with the other Greater Manchester authorities, with the exception of Stockport, on bringing forward the Places for Everyone (PFE) development plan. This allocates significant land for development at Carrington and

Timperley Wedge, including Green Belt release. The plan has completed its Regulation 19 consultation and will undergo Examination in 2022.

- 6.7 PFE will set the housing need for Trafford and, given the distribution of housing across the PFE area, reduces the LHN number (albeit retains the 20% buffer for historic under delivery). Applying the PFE LHN to the November 2021 supply gives 5.63 years. Applying it to the supply including the additional sites likely to come forward in the next 12 months gives 7.92 years housing land supply.
- 6.8 Although the Council does not directly rely on either the additional sites figure or the PFE figure in this appeal, it demonstrates that there is a direction of travel in which the Council will be able to clearly demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply within 12 months and a more than adequate supply of housing land thereafter.
- 6.9 It is also telling that if the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework had progressed as originally anticipated (and which did not progress for reasons unrelated to Trafford) there would now be a 5 year housing land supply. PFE replaced the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) when Stockport determined they would no longer continue and the LHN was adjusted accordingly. Using the GMSF LHN (including buffer) would give a housing land supply at November 2021 of just under 6 years, and with the additional sites identified above, 8.5 years.

## **7.0 THE APPEAL SCHEME: REVERSING PROGRESS**

- 7.1 Why then, in the face of an improving delivery situation and a deficit in housing land supply would this scheme not be welcomed? On first glance, it would appear that granting planning permission for the appeal scheme would improve the Council's housing land supply position and further improve housing delivery. It is of course in one of the Strategic Locations, and one where higher density residential development is being encouraged.
- 7.2 It has been explained elsewhere in the Council's evidence why development should not proceed at any cost and the various serious and significant harms have been compellingly made out. These harms would exist for the lifetime of the development, unless in the case of developer contributions, they are funded by the public sector.

They boil down to two primary issues: the development is fundamentally too big for the site and the site could and should viably provide a greater level of affordable housing and a contribution to education. There is a simple way of addressing these harms – by reducing the scale and quantum of the development proposed and by providing a planning policy compliant level of developer contributions. The Council does not object to the principle of residential redevelopment of the site but it has to be of an appropriate scale and form, and it must mitigate its own impact on infrastructure.

- 7.3 The application has been made in outline, albeit with only the matter of landscaping reserved. It will therefore do nothing in the short to medium term to contribute to the Council's five year housing land supply – with the standard reserved matters conditions allowing three years for reserved matters to be submitted and then a further two years for development to take place. Although they state they intend to build out this scheme, the appellant does not have a track record of carrying out new build construction – with only refurbishment to be found in its portfolio. The company appears to operate mainly in acquisition, equity release, restructuring and resale of property assets. The Council therefore considers that this application is a speculative / land flipping opportunity rather than a genuine desire to bring forward development. Indeed, the appellant disputes the inclusion of the appeal site in the Council's updated housing land supply figure on the basis that it does not meet the NPPF definition of 'deliverable'. They cannot have it both ways; asserting that significant weight should be given to the contribution the site will make to the Council's housing land supply whilst at the same time stating that the site should not be considered deliverable within five years.
- 7.4 The Council has sought to apply the same principles of sound planning judgement in this case and in establishing the height parameters for the Civic Quarter AAP. It has also sought, over the last 12 – 18 months, to fundamentally reset developer expectations in respect of land value, developer contributions, and the quality expected of new development. Applications are now coming forward, in the Civic Quarter and elsewhere, which meet the Council's aspirations. The Council sees the future as sustainable and inclusive growth for the benefit of everyone and is entirely committed to putting its own investment into this – as at Lumina Village and elsewhere – to make sure it comes forward and to give a clear message to the development industry that they must play their part. Alongside this it is progressing a new Local Plan which

enshrines these values; albeit they exist in the Council's (up to date) existing planning policy.

- 7.5 A grant of planning permission for the appeal scheme would undermine this approach. It is contrary to the basic premise of the Civic Quarter AAP. The proof of Ms. Harrison sets out the place, context and design led approach to development in the area that the AAP masterplanning approach adopts. Policy CQ11 of the AAP (Core Document CD-I1) takes a proportionate approach to the collection of developer contributions to affordable housing and infrastructure, based on robust viability analysis.
- 7.6 The proof of Ms. Harrison sets out the various significant harms which arise from the totally acontextual design of the scheme. Fundamentally, the scheme fails to achieve that which is necessarily required to deliver the Civic Quarter AAP. It fails in terms of a context led approach, the application of a vision or design philosophy, an appropriate urban grain or any acknowledgement of the relationship with any of the surrounding residential development. It ignores the underlying urban design principles and vision – supported and taken forward by an award winning team of consultants – which demonstrate clearly that taller development should have its focus to the north and that there should be a transition in scale to then reflect the scale of two storey, suburban development which wraps round this site to the south.
- 7.7 Neither does the scheme properly address its impacts in respect of infrastructure and affordable housing.
- 7.8 Thus a grant of permission for the appeal scheme will reverse the progress the Council has made in the last two years in bringing forward sites for development at appropriate scale and density, and with appropriate contributions. It will undermine the premise of the Civic Quarter AAP and the Council's assertive and demonstrably successful approach to improving housing supply and delivery.

## **8.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 The Council's most recently published 5 year housing land supply figure (March 2021) is 2.58 years. However, at November 2021, this stands at 4.41 years, following a comprehensive review of sites (including new permissions) making up the supply.

- 8.2 This is a much improved position, and has arisen as a result of the Council taking decisive action over the last two years in respect of housing supply and delivery, including its own intervention in the market.
- 8.3 Historically, inflated expectations on land value and escalating demands to set aside developer contributions and provide necessary supporting infrastructure from the public purse had led to a situation where without a fundamental shift in the land market in Trafford, supply and delivery was artificially constrained. It fell to the Council to set about taking assertive action to bring about this shift in the land market.
- 8.4 The land value expectation on this site has driven an excessively large and intense development and a lack of appropriate s.106 obligations. Granting permission here would undermine rather than support delivery because it would entrench the wrong historic narrative that inappropriate development can come forward to maximise land value whilst failing to deliver the infrastructure and affordable housing necessary to meet the needs of the new population.
- 8.5 The Council has sought, over the last 12 – 18 months, to fundamentally reset developer expectations in respect of land value, developer contributions, and the quality expected of new development. Applications are now coming forward which meet the Council's aspirations.
- 8.6 The land supply is also a snapshot in time, and presently an artificially deflated figure. There is a natural delay, worsened in the last 18 months by the impact of restrictions associated with the pandemic, in a developer deciding to bring a scheme forward and a planning application being submitted.
- 8.7 There are a number of significant schemes which have not been included in the land supply but that the Council is aware developers are very keen to bring forward and will likely come into the supply in the next 12 months, and it is anticipated that the Council will have a five year housing land supply within that period. Thus the current land supply does not yet give the true picture of a greatly improving situation, and the beginnings of a long overdue shift in the land market in the Borough which has arisen as a result of the Council's assertive action.

- 8.8 The deficit in housing land supply should therefore be given less weight in the planning balance than if it had arisen as a result of the Council not allocating sites or not granting sufficient planning permissions.
- 8.9 Less weight should also be given to the appellant's assertion that the site would contribute to the Council's shortfall in housing land, given that they have themselves stated that the site should not be considered 'deliverable' in NPPF terms.