

CD12.35.5.1



**TRAFFORD
COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL'S FURTHER RESPONSE
TO MAIN MATTERS, ISSUES AND
QUESTIONS**

MAIN MATTER 5

JULY 2011

TOPIC PAPER

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Introduction

The Council originally responded to the Inspector's Main Matters Issues and Questions (MMIQs) in relation to Main Matter 5 in February 2011, based on, amongst others, a proposed policy to return the land at Davenport Green to the Green Belt (CD12.35.5).

The purpose of this note is to update the Inspector and the Examination with the current position being presented by the Council, following the additional work that has been carried out since the Hearing sessions were adjourned. Specifically this work relates to the land at Davenport Green and the changes to national policy by way of the Budget Statement "Plan for Growth".

As a result of the policy statement "Plan for Growth", and the subsequent proposed changes to Policy R4, as set out in the Council's further response to the Inspector's Note 5 CD12.67.1, the Council has revisited each of the Inspector's original MMIQs. The following sections detail any additional information that is relevant to these questions and that it wishes to be put to the Examination.

MAIN MATTER 5.1

With particular reference to R4.3, the proposed addition of land at Davenport Green to the Green Belt, is the evolution of policy R4 clear and transparent? Has this policy proposal been the subject of adequate public consultation and is it justified by a robust Sustainability Appraisal?

- 5.1.1 With regard to the evolution of the Policy, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and public consultation the position as of February 2011 is clearly set out in paragraphs 5.1.1 – 5.1.13 (CD 12.35.1) of the original response to Main Matter 5. However since that date further work has been undertaken on these matters. The paragraphs below set out the further evolution of the Policy, SA and consultation work that has been carried out.
- 5.1.2 Following the pre-examination meeting on 25 January the Inspector requested that further SA be consulted upon that identified the status of Davenport Green as outside the Green Belt. This work up to this point had only been used for internal purposes. At the same time the Council commissioned its consultants to undertake further SA taking into account the further information submitted by RLAM in November 2010, (CD 12.37.2). Both SAs were made available for consultation at the same time in February 2011.
- 5.1.3 During this process it became clear that, due to a technical failure, not all the new information submitted by RLAM in November 2010 was used during this appraisal and so a further SA was consulted upon in April 2011 (CD 12.72). In order to address concerns raised by RLAM this SA included more detailed commentary; specifically assessed the impact of returning the land at Davenport Green to the Green Belt, as

specified in Policy R4.3 and; provided a chronology of stages undertaken in the SA process (CD 12.72 Appendix A). This process gave consultees a further opportunity to comment on the SA of the Plan.

- 5.1.4 The Council considers that the above work has further strengthened its conclusion provided in CD12.35.5 and that the evolution of policy R4 is clear and transparent, has been subject to adequate public consultation and justified by robust Sustainability Appraisal.
- 5.1.5 However since the above work was carried out, there have been a number of changes to national policy, most notably that associated with the Budget Statement “Plan for Growth”. These changes have resulted in the Council reappraising its position in relation to the land at Davenport Green.
- 5.1.6 For the reasons explained above and set out in the Council’s further response to the Inspector’s note 5 (CD12.67.1.1) and the further response to Main Matter 4 (CD12..35.4.1) it is no longer proposed to return the land at Davenport Green to the Green Belt. Instead a locally distinctive designation for this land is proposed for inclusion within Policy R4. This policy will enable the Council to protect the land as countryside, in PPS7 terms, until such time that it can be demonstrated that there is a deliverable proposal to provide an exceptionally high quality development on the site, attracting substantial additional employment to the sub-region.
- 5.1.7 This change has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal which is appended to the Council’s Further Response to the Inspector’s Note 5 (CD12.67.1.1).
- 5.1.8 It is considered that such a change at this stage in the Plan making process will require a further period of consultation. The Council considers that it would be appropriate for this consultation period to take place following the resumed Hearing Sessions in July for a period of time to be agreed with the Inspector. It may be necessary to hold a further Hearing session following the closure of this consultation period to allow consideration of matters raised.

MAIN MATTER 5.2

Does the proposed Green Belt addition amount to a local detailed boundary change, or should it be considered as being a strategic change?

- 5.2.1 The original response has now been superseded as the Council is no longer proposing a change to the Green Belt boundary.

MAIN MATTER 5.3

If the latter, is the proposal in general conformity with policy RDF 4 of the RSS which presumes against such change in the Greater Manchester area?

5.3.1 The original response has now been superseded as the Council is no longer proposing a change to the Green Belt boundary.

MAIN MATTER 5.4

Taking into account the recent removal of this land from the Green Belt, is R4.3 consistent with PPG2 which places considerable emphasis on the longevity of Green Belt boundaries?

5.4.1 The original response has now been superseded as the Council is no longer proposing a change to the Green Belt boundary and the Policy as drafted is now entirely consistent with PPG2.

MAIN MATTER 5.5

Do the reasons for R4.3 given in justification text at paragraphs 24.9-24.17 amount to the necessary exceptional circumstances referred to in paragraph 2.7 of PPG2?

5.5.1 The original response has now been superseded as the Council is no longer proposing a change to the Green Belt boundary and it is therefore not required to detail exceptional circumstances. For the avoidance of doubt, paragraphs 24.9-24.17 have been redrafted in the revised Policy (see CD12.67.1.1) to reflect the Council's current policy position in relation to land at Davenport Green.

MAIN MATTER 5.6

Has an alternative proposal of designating land at Davenport Green as other protected/safeguarded land been considered? If not, why not? If so, why was this alternative rejected?

5.6.1 The Council's original response has been superseded in relation to this matter. The Council did consider other designations prior to the current proposed change. Its conclusion in relation to Protected Open Land in PPG2 terms was set out in the original response to the MMIQ 5.6. This position was reiterated in the April consultation document (CD 12.72), section 8.

5.6.2 The Council reconsidered this matter in June 2011 (CD12.83) and reaffirmed its conclusions. Having considered all the further evidence provided by RLAM, the Council considers that there remains

insufficient evidence to support the possibility of this site being needed to meet development needs beyond the plan period if the Enterprise Zone does not come forward. In the event that the Enterprise Zone does stimulate the need for development at Davenport Green, it is likely that this would be within the plan period. Neither set of circumstances would meet the criteria for designation of the site as Protected Open Land within the context of PPG2.

5.6.3 The Council originally considered that the site should be returned to the GB, as it would not have been appropriate to designate it as Protected Open Land, but is now proposing a change to the designation of this site as Countryside. Recent developments associated with the Government's Plan for Growth statement have raised the possibility that the site could be required to meet a very specific need during the plan period. This would mean that if the site was to be returned to the Green Belt, there would be a possibility that it would be necessary to bring the site forward for development in order to meet that need. This would undermine the permanence of the Green Belt. Therefore, the Council has revisited the issue of other possible protected land designations in June 2011 (CD 12.83), resulting in a change to the proposed designation of the site. This change is detailed in the amended Policy R4, appended to the Council's Further Response to the Inspector's Note % (CD12.67.1.1).

MAIN MATTER 5.7

For flexibility in housing delivery, has the removal from the Green Belt of land at Ashton upon Mersey been considered? If not, why not? If so, why was it rejected?

Council's Response

5.7.1 The Council considers that its approach to this piece of land is consistent with the statement Plan for Growth and therefore its original response to this MMIQ remains valid.

MAIN MATTER 5.8

What is the justification for protecting land at Warburton and south of Shell, Carrington?

5.8.1 *The Council has nothing further to add in relation to this MMIQ.*

MAIN MATTER 5.9

Have any other such sites been considered and if so why were they rejected?

5.9.1 The Council's position in relation to the designation of other sites for future housing needs is set out in the Council's original response to MMIQs 5.7 and 5.8 and these remain valid. In the light of recent policy changes, the Council does not consider that any further sites, other

than the one at Davenport Green, should be identified as protected open land because the housing and economic strategies are not considered to be deficient.

MAIN MATTER 5.10

Is the policy towards Protected Land sufficiently flexible to enable land to be brought forward for development if other sites, including the Strategic Locations, fail to deliver as required in order to achieve the housing and economic objectives of the Core Strategy?

5.10.1 The Council has nothing further to add in relation to this MMIQ.