

TRAFFORD CORE STRATEGY

Comments invited on 20 July 2011 for full consideration by the Inspector on the Council's proposed changes to Policy R4 – Green Belt, Countryside and Other Protected Open Land and Policy W1 – Economy

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Additional Comments on Trafford Core Strategy – 2 September 2011

Background

These comments are provided in addition to those already submitted on 7 July 2011.

Discussion

It has been noted that Trafford Council states in para 18.11 of CD 12.95 that, "All proposals for the development of any industrial, commercial, warehousing and storage uses associated with Manchester Airport will be subject to very careful assessment in consultation with Manchester Airport Plc and other appropriate agencies to determine the appropriateness of the proposal".

This text raises a number of concerns. First, it is unclear why this particular text has been included, especially when it is borne in mind that, so far as I am aware, there are no policies elsewhere within the Core Strategy that entertain consideration of industrial, commercial, warehousing and storage uses associated with other named organisations. Secondly, the rationale for, "very careful assessment in consultation with Manchester Airport Plc" seems odd when it is clearly for the Council to make its own assessment as to the benefit and/or detriment that might be brought about by development associated with operations outside the Borough.

In the context of possible land use of the site at Davenport Green, it is perhaps worth noting that this particular site was released by Trafford Council from the Green Belt, following a Public Inquiry, for a Strategic High Amenity Employment Site only, not for commercial, warehousing and storage uses, or even for "an airfreight logistics operation", even though Manchester Airport might have identified this particular site as perhaps being suitable for its own expansionary purposes. In his letter of 22 April 2010 (CD 10.6.2, Representor 1064, 22 April 2010), Mr John Twigg (Manchester Airport Group Planning Director), for example, informs the Trafford LDF Team that, "the Master Plan and ideas emerging from the "Airport City" work both identify a significant opportunity for the

development of a major airfreight logistics operation that is focused on the Airport, to be located on an adjacent or 'near' airport development site. Mr Twigg also says, "not all airport business activities and land uses will be located in the AOA, but will still require a location in close proximity to Manchester Airport" and he goes on to say that, "in light of all this, we feel it is premature to exclude land at Davenport Green from consideration".

Even though Mr Twigg refers to the Wythenshawe Strategic Regeneration Framework (2004) as first establishing the idea of "development corridors", which he says is reflected in the Airport Master Plan to 2030 (CD12.49), it is apparent from Figure 4 of (CD12.49) that Manchester Airport sees Davenport Green as part of its Airport Site and Development Corridor.

More important perhaps than the points made above regarding pressure for development at Davenport Green, there is the fact that Trafford Council itself recognises that, proposed changes to the Green Belt by Manchester City Council in the vicinity of Manchester Airport would cause it, "to have significant concerns should this proposed amendment to the Green Belt boundary result in an increase in such development pressure, which ultimately could seek to undermine the Timperley Wedge". This comment by Mr Dennis Smith (Trafford Council's Head of Strategic Planning & Housing Services) on Manchester Core Strategy Proposed Policy MA 1 Manchester Airport Strategic Site on 24 March 2011 (Manchester Core Strategy Comment ID 181) shows quite clearly that Trafford Council is well aware of pressure for development of the Timperley Wedge. Indeed, Mr Smith states in his comments on the Manchester Core Strategy that, "the Council has for sometime experienced development pressure in the Timperley Wedge for both residential and commercial development. The Council would therefore have significant concerns should this proposed amendment to the Green Belt boundary result in an increase in such development pressure, which ultimately could seek to undermine the Timperley Wedge".

Conclusions

In the light of Mr Smith's comments on the Manchester Core Strategy, it is apparent that Trafford Council is well aware that the "Timperley Wedge" could easily lose its Green Belt role, so it is of major concern that the Council should reverse its decision to return Davenport Green to the Green Belt and leave the possibility of development open, at a time when it knows that such a policy could undermine the role and importance of the Timperley Wedge.

It is apparent that Trafford Council's current position in relation to land at Davenport Green is inconsistent with its own assessment of the proper role of this land and its understanding of the use to which it might ultimately be put. The changes to Proposed Policies R4 and W1 are therefore unsound.

J.C. Williams
2 September 2011