Re: Examination of the Poynton Neighbourhood Development Plan

Dear Andy,

Further to your letter of 9th April 2019, please see overleaf the Council's response to your questions intended for the Local Planning Authority.

Our response will be published to our website and shared with the Qualifying Body.

Should you have any further queries or require further explanation on any issues contained in our response, please do contact us directly.

Tom Evans
Neighbourhood Planning Manager
Cheshire East Council
Questions to CEC

1. Land at Glastonbury Lane is also referred to in the Poynton Settlement Report FD 39 of the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) evidence base, where it is proposed as a site for the relocation of the Poynton Sports facility. The Regulation 16 response from CEC in relation to EGB 5 comments about the potential relocation of the Poynton Sports Club. The map in FD 39 (page 22) indicates that the land for any such relocation would be a 10 ha site outlined in red. The land which is the subject of Policy EGB 4 appears to be a 1.35 ha site, just to the south east. Therefore, does CEC wish to reconsider its response?

   Yes – the original response makes incorrect reference to relocating the Poynton Sports Club to the site referred to in EGB5. This is a mistake and the comment should be discounted from consideration.

2. Policy EGB 4 identifies the potential development of a small site in the Green Belt (1.35 ha) for housing. The Neighbourhood Plan states that it is safeguarded land for this use. The policies are developed further in HOU 14A and HOU 14B. The definition of Safeguarded Land is a strategic policy in the CELPS. Does CEC have any comments to make on the inclusion of these policies in the Plan?

   Safeguarded land is land between the urban area and the Green Belt, identified to meet longer term development needs beyond the plan period. Whilst existing legislation and national policy makes no direct provision for neighbourhood plans to safeguard land for future development, paragraph 136 of the 2018 NPPF allows neighbourhood plans to alter the boundaries of the Green Belt, where a need to do so is identified by a strategic policy. Policy PG4 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy establishes the need to safeguard land in the Borough and Appendix 2 of the Local Plan Strategy Site Selection Methodology considers how the total 200ha of safeguarded land will be distributed. Therefore, the approach in principle appears acceptable under the NPPF 2018.

   However the neighbourhood plan was submitted prior to January 24th 2018 and is therefore tested against the NPPF 2011 which makes no such provision as outlined above. Therefore whilst the LPA do not object to the pursuit of allocating safeguarded land it is not clear that the approach could be said to have ‘due regard to national policy’, a requirement of the basic conditions tests.

   Additionally, this matter of how the approach could be said to have due regard to national policy is not thoroughly addressed in the justification to the policy and little evidence is provided as to why additional safeguarded land is required in this location. LPS52 allocates 22ha of land for development beyond the plan period and the LPA is not proposing to allocate any further safeguarded land at Poynton in the emerging part two of the local plan, the SADPD. Non strategic allocations of safeguarded, amounting to circa 13ha, are instead proposed to be allocated across several Local Service Centres.

   Therefore whilst the LPA has no objection in principle, and the potential future flexibility of land supply in this location is welcome, it is not clear that this approach is compatible with NPPF 2011 or, given the existing provision of safeguarded land at Poynton, why it is necessary to take forward the approach set out in the neighbourhood plan.