

MATTER 7



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Planning & Development Consultants

Examination of the City of York Local Plan

Matters, Issues and Questions for the Examination

Phase 2 Hearings

Matter 7 – Approach to Setting Green Belt Boundaries

March 2022

CLIENT: KCS Development Limited



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This response has been prepared on behalf of KCS Development Limited in relation to their land interests immediately west of Chapelfields on the western edge of York City.
- 1.2 Previous submissions have been made to the various draft Local Plan iterations Phase 1 Examination Hearing Statements, and most recently a detailed response to the June 2021 Modifications and Evidence Base Consultation, the content of which remains relevant.
- 1.3 It is maintained that the site at Chapelfields is available for development of circa 90 dwellings and would create a small sustainable urban extension to the existing settlement of Chapelfields.
- 1.4 In addition to this statement relating to Examination Matter 7, it should be noted that statements have been prepared for Matter 2 and 7 on behalf of KCS Development Ltd and Johnson Mowat will be representing KCS Development Ltd at the Phase 2 Examination Hearing sessions relating to Matters 2, 4 and 7.



2.0 TEST OF SOUNDNESS

2.1 The City of York Local Plan is being tested against the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) which at Paragraph 182 states that:

“The Local Plan will be examined by an independent inspector whose role is to assess whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, legal and procedural requirements, and whether it is sound. A local planning authority should submit a plan for examination which it considers is “sound” – namely that it is:

- Positively prepared – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- Justified – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- Effective – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- Consistent with national policy – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.”



3.0 RESPONSE TO INSPECTOR'S QUESTIONS

Matter 7 – Approach to Setting Green Belt Boundaries

The questions concerning Green Belt are aimed at the strategic level. Later questions during the Phase 3 hearings will address issues in relation to specific parts of the boundaries proposed, including those around development sites. In responding to the following questions, consideration should be in the context of the Council's submitted evidence to date, including its Topic Paper 1 relating to the Green Belt [CD021], its subsequent Addenda to Topic Paper 1 [EX/CYC/18; EX/CYC/18a-f; EX/CYC/50 and EX/CYC/50a-d and EX/CYC/59 and EX/CYC/59a-g]; and the modifications proposed by the Council, to the submitted Plan resulting from these documents set out in the Examination Document Library.

7.1 This Local Plan will formally define the boundaries of the York Green Belt for the first time. The Council's approach to defining the Green Belt boundaries now proposed is set out in 'Topic Paper TP1 – Approach to Defining York's Green Belt: Addendum' (January 2021) [EX/CYC/59]. In the light for the evidence, in setting the proposed Green Belt boundaries:

a) how, in simple summary, have the proposed boundaries been arrived at?

This is for the Council to provide.

b) what influence have heritage assets and other environmental designations, such as conservation areas and SSSIs had on the setting of Green Belt boundaries?

This is unclear and is for the Council to explain.

The methodology in the TP1 Addendum is not considered to be robust in identifying Green Belt boundaries that would serve the function of purpose 4 of the Green Belt 'to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.'

c) how does the approach now taken in the aforementioned new evidence differ from the method previously used by the Council and what is the reason for the differences?

Again, this is for the Council to explain the differences and the reasons behind the differences. Whilst the approach has changed, the 2021 TP1 Addendum revisions have made no material difference to the outcome of the Green Belt boundaries, as put forward in the 2019 Green Belt Topic Paper.



- d) **how has the need to promote sustainable patterns of development been taken into account?**
- e) **how have the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary been considered?**
- f) **how do the proposed Green Belt boundaries ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development?**

We have previously raised concerns with the spatial strategy and portfolio of sites included in the Local Plan that appears to be a combination of urban expansion, provision of isolated new settlements and restricted growth in existing settlements. The inclusion of a significantly large housing allocation in an isolated location significantly separated from the main urban area does not promote sustainable patterns of development. The additional explanatory text to Policy SS1 does not justify the continued approach, which includes a new isolated settlement in a less sustainable location.

7.2 As a matter of principle, do the proposed Green Belt boundaries include any land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open?

A number of concerns have been raised in relation to the Council's TP1 Addendum evidence, including the methodology overall, which assesses how boundaries perform against the key characteristics in relation to the setting and special character of York, rather than focusing on the openness of land and its functionality against the specific Green Belt purposes. The methodology does not define parcels of land, therefore is unable to assess how much land should be safeguarded and kept permanently open.

There is a lack of assessment of openness in the TP1 Addendum in understanding what land is necessary to keep permanently open. The TP1 Addendum assesses boundaries rather than boundaries and land beyond the suburban edge.

7.3 Overall, is the approach to setting Green Belt boundaries clear, justified and effective and is it consistent with national policy?

We rely on the detailed submissions made to the July 2021 Evidence Base consultation, which highlights a number of concerns with the Council's methodology to setting Green Belt boundaries.



Despite over 2,000 pages of additional evidence provided as part of the June 2021 proposed modifications and additional supporting evidence consultation, there is very little new material in the City of York Local Plan. The Council's Green Belt evidence addendum has not altered the approach to allocating sites and defining the Green Belt boundaries. It is not considered that the Green Belt Addendum provides a fully justified reasoning for the resultant Inner Green Belt boundaries.