

JMW Planning Limited

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan Examination.

Hearing statement on behalf of Mr T. Campbell for Session 10 starting at 9.30
Wednesday 17th October 2018 concerned with Matter 8- Cheadle Allocations.

1. Introduction.

1.1 Mr Campbell and his relatives own the land on the south western side of Cheadle between the existing built up area and the green belt. He has previously made representations as the Core Strategy has gone through its various stages before being adopted in March 2014. Further details may be found in the June 2018 Site Allocations topic paper for Cheadle (examination library document 13.3) and so will not be repeated here.

1.2 This statement has been written by John Wren BA (Hons) MCD FRGS MRTPI. Following a career at a senior level in local government in Staffordshire and Derbyshire, I started my consultancy on 1st April 1999 initially as a sole trader but then as a director of my company. I have been a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute since July 1973 and have extensive experience of all aspects of planning including the preparation of an “old style” Local Plan in the 1990s. I am a retired member of the Planning Officers Society.

1.3 Whilst welcoming the continued allocation of the land to the west of the existing built up area to the south of Cheadle, an allocation which goes back to 1971 and the Cheadle Town Map, Mr Campbell has consistently argued that more land should be taken out of the green belt to facilitate a comprehensive residential development capable of addressing the chronic shortfall of new housing in Cheadle, particularly affordable housing. The attached ownership plan shows that it would be physically possible to increase the size of the allocation. The southern section has been promoted as SHLAA site CH093.

1.4 At the time of writing this statement the family are in the final stages of signing a contract with a housebuilder/developer capable of developing the allocated land quickly. There would

be no objections from the family to the contract being extended to bring in such additional green belt releases as were deemed appropriate through this Local Plan Examination.

1.5 The remainder of this statement responds to the questions posed by Mr Dakeyne in respect of Mobberley Farm (Policy DSC3) for discussion on 17th October 2018. His numbering is used for clarity and reference should also be made to SHLAA Plan for Cheadle South. (Examination document 26.4). Questions directed at the Council have not been responded to.

4.1 *Have exceptional circumstances been demonstrated to justify the removal of land from the Green Belt?*

4.1a. The short answer is “yes” but there are two aspects to the question. Currently the Council’s justification appears primarily to be the need to create a suitable vehicular access to serve the whole allocation coupled with the limited impact SHLAA sites CH128 and an eastern section of CH093 have on the reasons for creating a green belt in the first place.

4.1b. Mr Campbell has consistently queried the need for this access to be the southern part of a link road joining up with SHLAA site CH003 to the north but there is no doubt that there will need to be a new access to serve the whole of residential allocation CH085a to CH085d, albeit that some of the land may be served off the existing highways network to the east through that residential area. Preliminary contact has taken place with the agent for CH128 but further discussions are awaiting the outcome of this Examination.

4.1c. Given the identified need to provide more housing in Cheadle, possibly more than the Council is currently allocating, then the creation of an access to serve this strategic allocation is considered by Mr Campbell to create the exceptional circumstances required.

4.1d. The second aspect relates to Mr Campbell’s suggestion that more land should be taken out of the green belt than the Council currently proposes. The western boundary of the proposed allocation has always related more to the historical Town Map than the physical realities of this site. At the time that the Town Map was created there was not the pressing need to allocate land for housing and so it would seem arbitrary boundaries based on perceived housing requirements were drawn across fields rather than using the more logical

boundary of the Brookhouse stream to the west of the allocation as a defensible and easily recognisable boundary between the town and the green belt.

4.1e. That is a matter that could be corrected through this Examination. So too is the inclusion of more land within a housing allocation by taking SHLAA site CH093 out of the green belt. Here again there would be the easily recognisable and defensible boundary of the Mobberley Brook running to the south of Mr Campbell's land. This is discussed in more detail in response to question 4.7 and is considered to be a rational response to the current housing position in Cheadle which does create the exceptional circumstances required.

4.5 Should land beyond the site to be used for open space/surface water mitigation be included within any allocation?

4.5a. It would be logical to do so given the agreed need for a masterplan for the allocation. Whilst open space or the requirements of a flood risk assessment might well not impact adversely on the openness of the green belt there would be more flexibility for the production of a masterplan if land to the west and south of the allocation were to be taken out of the green belt and included within the allocation.

4.7 Would delivery of sufficient housing numbers in Cheadle, the site and the link road be assisted by the inclusion of additional land within the allocation?

4.7a. There can be no doubt that it would. Primarily this question relates to SHLAA site CH093 which is currently within the green belt. As such it was included within the 2015 Amec Foster Wheeler Green Belt Review (examination library document 22.4). Relevant conclusions are to be found in document Appendix C (22.4C) at pages 30 to 33.

4.7b. For ease of reference, the recommendation in the report is that CH093 should be considered for "release under exceptional circumstances with amendment to the Town Boundary." The overall impact of development on the site in relation to the purposes of having a Green Belt is described by the report as "moderate." It is described as making a contribution to checking sprawl but Mr Campbell considers that Mobberley Brook would be a more recognisable and defensible boundary and that it would be better to describe this as

making only a “limited contribution” to bring it into line with the report’s description in respect of maintaining separation.

4.7c. Similarly, the contribution towards preventing encroachment could easily be described as “limited” as could the preservation of the setting of this part of Cheadle. The most important conclusion in the report as far as Mr Campbell is concerned is the view that “comprehensive masterplanning of this site and land immediately to the north would create a comprehensive scheme with significant external boundaries.”

4.7d. Given that the only opportunity of reviewing green belt boundaries is through Examinations such as this, Mr Campbell feels that the exceptional circumstances required to take SHLAA site CH093 out of the green belt and allocate it as part of the Mobberley Farm Strategic Development Site will result from a close examination of the housing requirement for Cheadle in particular and Staffordshire Moorlands as a whole.

4.7e. Matters of housing land supply were prominent in the pre-Examination correspondence between Mr Dakeyne and the Council. It is noted, for example that in paragraph 40 of his letter of 21st August 2018 (EL1.001d) Mark James for the Council accepted that the introduction of a 10% slippage allowance would equate to the need for the Local Plan to identify land for an extra 385 homes and that this would not come through windfalls.

4.7f. If additional allocations have to be found then it would be logical at this stage of the proceedings to increase the size of already proposed sites rather than introduce new sites on which the public has not had the opportunity of commenting. The exceptional circumstances would be the need to ensure that the Local Plan is going to provide the housing requirement for the District which has hitherto not been met.

4.7g Including CH093 within this strategic allocation would have a limited impact on the functions of the green belt as explained above. It would also not impact on existing residents which would be a concern with other sites. It would however generate more income from house sales to contribute towards all the requirements of DSC3 including the provision of what the County Highways Authority is now calling an “Outer Distributor Road.”

4.8 Is the site deliverable taking into account different ownerships including land required for access?

4.8a Yes. There are no physical barriers to the site being developed. Discussions about the access can continue once the outcome of this Examination is known and the Local Plan is progressed.

4.9 Are the density assumptions reasonable?

4.9. In principle yes but much will depend on the extent of open space required and where that is going to be as outlined in the response to 4.5 above. Flexibility in the future will be the key together with some official recognition that the “approximate” housing numbers in policy DSC3 are not an upper limit.

John Wren.

21st September 2018.