

## LEE ROWLEY MP: BRIEFING NOTE FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS ON THE CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

### **Background**

*A consultation is currently being undertaken on the draft North East Derbyshire Local Plan – the document which will determine how our area will develop, and where houses will be built, in the coming years. This is an important consultation where we can make the case that the remaining Dronfield greenbelt sites proposed in the current draft plan aren't needed and shouldn't be built on.*

*All residents can get involved in the consultation if they wish. The consultation is a technical one (on some proposed modifications to the draft document) and arguments need to be made based on established planning rules and principles. If you are responding, we recommend that you use specific arguments to maximise the impact of your response and to increase the chance of success.*

*This note outlines some of the points you might like to make if you decide to respond to the consultation. You can use some or all of these points. The arguments we recommend you make are broken down into three – (1) where we think you should agree with some of the proposals under consultation (see box 1), (2) where you should disagree (see box 2) and then (3) some wider observations you should make about the proposals (see boxes 3 and 4).*

### ***(1) Proposals we recommend you agree with***

- **That the Inspector was right to remove the site at Eckington Road, Coal Aston (DR2):** we strongly support the Inspector's proposal in 2019 to remove the proposal to build 200 houses at Eckington Road, Coal Aston.
- **That the Inspector was right to reduce the size of the site at Chesterfield Road, Dronfield (DR1) – but we strongly want her to go further and remove it altogether:** We agree with the Inspector that, in principle, there is a visual and harm issue caused by the proposals at Chesterfield Road. Whilst the Inspector has, so far, seen fit to reduce the size of the proposed plot from 235 to 160 houses, we strongly believe that she should now go further and remove the plot entirely from the Plan.

### ***(2) Proposals that we recommend you disagree with***

- **That you disagree that housebuilding at Chesterfield Road (DR1) should remain in the plan:** residents should say that they disagree with the remaining 160 houses still proposed to be built on greenbelt at Chesterfield Road.
- **That you disagree that housebuilding at Stubby Hollow, Dronfield (DR3) should remain in the plan:** residents should make clear that they disagree with the 40 houses still proposed to be built on greenbelt at Stubby Hollow.

### ***(3) Important points we think you should also make to the Inspector***

- **That you remain unconvinced that the “exceptional circumstances” test has been made to remove any land in North East Derbyshire from the greenbelt at all:** under national rules, greenbelt sites can only be released for housebuilding if “exceptional circumstances” have been proven. We don’t think this is the case in North East Derbyshire and we recommend you highlight that no exceptional circumstances exist in our view. As a result, the Inspector should remove the remaining two greenbelt sites in Dronfield.
- **That the most recently published housing numbers for North East Derbyshire demonstrate there is no longer a shortfall of houses within the plan:** all local plans must have a target for housebuilding and North East Derbyshire’s was proposed a number of years ago, by a previous Council leadership, for 6,600 homes by 2034. Based on the amount of housebuilding that has already happened, has been approved or is planned, we do not think there is a material gap between the target and what will actually be built. As a result, the Inspector should accept that there is no need to build on the greenbelt sites.
- **That the Inspector’s justification for the removal of sites at Coal Aston and Eckington in 2019 really could be applied to the remaining sites in Dronfield:** that we would ask the Inspector to apply her own logic, as outlined in correspondence dated 18/02/2019, to remove the remaining Dronfield sites.

### ***(4) Other points you could make***

- **That coronavirus is likely to change the economic calculus of the coming years and may reduce demand for houses:** that given the current uncertain economic times, there is likely to be incrementally less demand in North East Derbyshire to 2034 and therefore not as many houses will be needed.
- **That we shouldn’t be supportive of sites, like on Chesterfield Road, which reduce the distance between settlements:** the Chesterfield Road site, if built, would further reduce the gap between the historic settlements of Unstone and Dronfield. We need to avoid the coalescence of the town with the village.
- **That we shouldn’t be supportive of sites with potential access issues such as Stubble Hollow and Chesterfield Road:** we think that access will be a real issue on both of these sites and, as a result, they shouldn’t be taken forward.
- **Development on the greenbelt is contrary to the widely held views of local residents in Dronfield, as evidenced by the Neighbourhood Plan:** in 2019, Dronfield residents voted 88% in favour a Neighbourhood Plan which said very clearly that preserving the greenbelt was very important – residents views should be heard.

#### ***Need more help or information?***

*Please just get in touch with Lee on [lee.rowley.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:lee.rowley.mp@parliament.uk) or 439222 and he will be happy to talk through this in more detail if needed.*